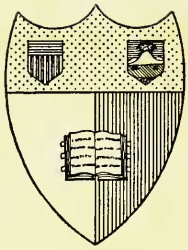
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PREFACE

THE 'Literary Epoch Series' is an attempt to provide, in a form and at a price suitable for School use, the elements of literary criticism; and, while not pretending to be a *complete* history of the literature of any epoch, it may be found to answer the demand of a large number of practical teachers for a text-book which seeks only to reproduce the essentially typical atmosphere of a literary epoch, without any attempt to 'cram' the names and works of all the writers of that epoch.

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The first question of the technical criticism will be concerned with the Elements of Style—the actual vocabulary, its arrangement in sentences and paragraphs, and its adornment (with Figures of Speech, etc.) ; the second will be concerned with the Qualities of Style—intellectual and emotional ; and the third with the kind of Composition.

L. W. LYDE.

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INTRODUCTION

THE literature, and especially the poetical literature, of a nation is always a reflection of its political and social life. Whenever in the history of literature we meet with any remarkable outburst of activity, we are sure to find that, side by side with the purely *literary* causes which were engaged in stimulating this activity, there were other forces at work, drawn from the *political life* of the nation, or the *everyday life* of the individual, which were no less far-reaching in their effects. These causes will be found to have combined to produce a condition of mind which was, as it were, infectious, and which gave a universal *stimulus* to the creative intellects, while rousing universal *sympathy* in the receptive ones.

GEORGIAN ERA, 1798–1830

Causes.—When we inquire what were the causes responsible for the poetic revival which heralded the opening of the nineteenth century, we find that, as in other similar revivals, they were of two kinds—

the one literary, the other social and political. Which of the two had the greater influence must yet remain a doubtful question. The main point to recollect is that the tendency of both lay in the same direction.

I.—LITERARY CAUSES

(1) *Reaction.*—The forty years which preceded the French Revolution are remarkable for their barrenness in the production of any poetry which deserves to be awarded a really high place in the literary history of this country. Nor is the cause far to seek. Pope died in 1744, and with him departed from English poetry the peculiar merits of the versification which he had introduced. He took with him from the world the care, dexterity, and conciseness, the polish and the wit, which so essentially distinguish everything which he wrote. He left to his successors and imitators nothing but his coldness and artificiality, which in the hands of inferior artists became mere dulness and monotony. To quote once more the often-quoted lines, Pope

> Made poetry a mere mechanic art,
> And every warbler had his tune by heart.

And, though by the force of his own genius he had extorted from the world more admiration for his style and methods than perhaps they deserve, it was not to be expected that, when he was gone, this

admiration should be extended to the style and methods of the poetasters who slavishly copied him.

A natural reaction set in. Men became weary of the languid effeminacy which, in the literary jargon of the day, was called 'correctness,' but which was in truth nothing but a servile submission to the prevailing taste. Poets began to direct their attention towards the ancient models, and to seek fresh inspiration in the works of Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakespeare. The reaction, though its course was gradual, was, in the case of some versifiers, rather violent in its character.

The reformers, in their desire to avoid the regularity and smoothness of diction that belonged to the school of Pope, wrote in too rugged and too harsh a style. In their anxiety to shun the coldness and epigrammatic neatness of the past epoch, they occasionally became bombastic and diffuse. But, in spite of all this, the services they rendered to the poetry of our own time were great, for the principles which guided them were sound. They boldly resisted the opposition of those who were still dominated by the spirit of the Augustan age of Anne. They continued to keep their eyes turned upon the first great masters of their art, and to press on in their search for newer and more human themes of action, and for a freer, fresher, and more natural versification.

This, then, was the first literary cause of the poetical revolution of the present century—reaction

against the shallowness and artificiality of the so-called Augustan writers. How strong that reaction still is may be shown by the fact that 'heroic metre,' as it was most inaptly called—the favourite metre of Pope and his school—is now extinct, or at least only survives in parodies and prize poems.

A useful and simple exercise for the young critic would be as follows:—Let him select two poems dealing with somewhat similar subjects, one from the poetry of the age of Anne, and the other written within the last hundred years, and let him compare the treatment, style, and method of each. We might suggest the study of Addison's *Campaign* side by side with the sixth canto of *Marmion*, or *The Temple of Fame* side by side with *The Palace of Art*. If, when this is done, and the contrast duly marked, he should read, as a commentary on Addison and Scott, one of the ballads in *Percy's Reliques*, and, as a commentary on Pope and Tennyson, something of Cowper's heroic metre, his own ear and judgment will enable him to trace the 'progress of poesy' during the last two hundred years. And in this connection it must be noted that to none of the forerunners of the nineteenth-century poets do we owe more than to Percy and Cowper. Cowper had the originality and courage to renounce, not merely in distinct and emphatic preaching, but also in his own practice, the conventional style and methods of

the day. He was the first who deliberately threw off allegiance to Pope, and turned to Nature as his guide, and to domesticity for his subjects. Bishop Percy, by his edition of the Old British Ballads, showed men where they might recover, from the most truly national part of our literature, that spirit which had been so long wanting to English poetry—the spirit of noble action and true passion, of the open air and the greenwood tree.

(2) *German Influence.*—While the tide of public taste was slowly turning away from the 'correct' poets, another influence in the same direction began to make itself felt. English literature has always been remarkably susceptible to impressions received from the literatures of other countries. It was fostered under the wing of France. It drew largely, in the Elizabethan era, from Italy, and again from France in the reign of Anne. It now turned towards Germany.

About the middle of the eighteenth century, Germany had undergone a change of literary sentiment similar to that upon which England was now entering. After a lengthened period of book-learning, critical rules, and imitations of antiquity or of foreign authors, she had begun to cultivate a more specially national form of poetry. In 1772 a Dichter-Bund, or Poets' Club, had been formed at Göttingen, with the avowed object of reforming German poetry by introducing a simple and un-

affected style of writing, as a substitute for the learned style which had hitherto been the fashion. As a result, much idyllic and ballad poetry was produced; and this, which was largely read and appreciated in England, played an important part in forming the genius of some of our foremost English writers, notably Coleridge and Scott. Indeed, Scott's earliest publication was a version of the *Leonore* of Bürger, a prominent member of the Göttingen Dichter-Bund. This German influence may be regarded as the second of the purely literary causes to which the poetical revival of the nineteenth century was due.

II.—SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CAUSES

(1) *French Revolution.*—By far the most important of the outside forces which at this time bore upon English poetry was the French Revolution. By it the great lesson 'All men are free' was driven into the hearts of Englishmen. Even before the political effects of the Revolution had reached as far as England, it had acted upon men's minds, much as the Reformation had acted in former times, by stimulating imagination and creating enthusiasm for liberty and freedom of thought. Different poets were affected by it in different ways. To the Lake school it suggested revolt against false models, return to Nature, and worship of Liberty in the abstract. To Byron and Shelley it suggested a crusade against *all* established power.

(2) *Peninsular War.*—During the long struggle which ended at Waterloo, when Englishmen were fighting, not indeed for liberty in the abstract, but for the liberties of the whole of Europe; when they were experiencing the varied excitements of terror and triumph, the intensity of their feelings was faithfully reflected in their poetry. Not only in its passionate earnestness and vivid imagination, but also in its amount, we find signs of the impression which the affairs of the outside world made upon the poets of the day. The poet most directly affected was Scott, who is the true representative of the 'patriot' school. Their watchword was not so much 'All men are free' as 'Let *my* country be free!'

Victorian Era—1830 to the Present Day

The Victorian era is one of prose and material progress rather than poetry. We find few names worthy of being placed in the very front rank of English poets. All the best poetry we have is distinguished—firstly, by a share in the democratic and scientific spirit of the age; secondly, by a decided advance in technical skill.

I.—Social and Political Influences

Democracy.—With the wearing out of the first effects of the French Revolution, other influences began to make themselves felt. When the fears

England had entertained about her own existence had disappeared with the overthrow of Napoleon, she began at last to set her own house in order.

The Reform Bill of 1832 gave the middle classes that fair share in the government of the country which they had been long demanding. The same impulse in the direction of liberty and justice produced the Bill for the Abolition of Slavery, which was passed the following year. The spirit of democracy began to make its voice heard,—not the rabid democracy of France, but a cautious tentative policy of progress, 'broad-based upon the people's will,' and free from violence and corruption. The nation at large began to take a more lively interest in political questions.

II.—INTELLECTUAL INFLUENCES

(1) *Science.*—At the same time, the material prosperity of the land began to be vastly increased. By numerous discoveries and inventions—notably, the invention of the locomotive steam-engine—conveniences and comforts hitherto unknown were introduced. The age was an intensely practical one, and all fresh speculation tended, directly or indirectly, towards the promotion of the physical well-being of mankind. The consequence of all this was that the intellectual forces of the nation were spent in almost every other form of energy except poetry. Poetry of considerable merit, no doubt, was written, but the

literary spirit of the age turned to prose as being the fitting vehicle for the discussion of the political and scientific questions which monopolised men's thoughts.

The special form of fresh speculation which concerned men's souls rather than their bodies circled round the doctrine of evolution. The assertions of naturalists and geologists about the origin of species and the creation and age of the earth so entirely traversed the established teachings of the Church, that every man began to find a more serious interest in scientific questions as bearing not merely on his present, but also on his future state. The discussion was keenly maintained, and every department of science was pressed into the service of one side or the other. The age became one of severe scientific inquiry, and poets, like other men, were thoroughly imbued with its spirit. Tennyson in particular has gone deeply into the subject of evolution, and his attitude towards religious questions seems to be one of reverent agnosticism, joined, in his later years, to something more than a 'faint trust' in the larger hope.

(2) *Education.*—Higher education shared in the advance of the age, and, with the spread of culture and more extensive knowledge of foreign literatures, came severer standards of criticism. It was not any longer possible for a work, devoid of merit in itself, to reach a fifth or sixth edition merely owing to assiduous puffing. The example of *The Edinburgh*

Review, which certainly lived up to its motto of *Judex damnatur dum nocens absolvitur*, was followed by all similar organs of criticism. It was no longer sufficient for the heart to be inditing of a good matter, unless the good matter was supported by a good manner. The result was that in all departments of literature, and especially in poetry, a higher ideal of form was aimed at, and literary workmanship, if nothing else, underwent vast improvement. The epoch is, as Matthew Arnold observes, one of concentration rather than expansion. The material is now, perhaps, being stored up, which may in future years be used in another revival, of which the producing causes have not yet appeared.

Conclusion

Such are the chief influences that have affected English poetry in the present century. The century itself can be, as we have shown, fitly divided into two periods,—the first lasting up to the year 1830, and the second bringing us down to the present day. We cannot more suitably conclude this Introduction than by quoting a few sentences of recent criticism, which set forth most admirably the main points of difference in thought which distinguish the earlier from the later school. 'They (the early Romantic poets) lacked vision for the world of man, save under certain broad and simple aspects,—the patriot, the peasant, the visionary, the child. They lacked vision

for the past, save at certain points, on which the spirit of Liberty had laid a fiery finger. In prose no doubt—the prose of Scott (of which his narrative verse is a province), of Lamb, of Landor, and in the splendid rhetorical verse of Byron, these limitations were in great part transcended. But in poetry they mark the character of the epoch. . . . But what they lacked was already present, enriched with almost all that they possessed, in Goethe; all the impulses and instincts of Romanticism in its widest scope are assembled in the poetic cosmos of *Faust*. And in the next generation English poetry also fulfilled Faust's aspiration to take upon itself the burden of humanity, most signally in the person of Browning; with more variety of tone, but also with more of insular limitation in Tennyson.'

WORDSWORTH

PART I.—HIS LIFE

William Wordsworth was born on 7th April 1770 at Cockermouth, in Cumberland. He was educated at Hawkshead School, and in 1787 went up to St. John's College, Cambridge, taking his degree three years later. He spent a year in France during the most thrilling period of the Revolution. On his return home he lived first in Dorsetshire and afterwards in Somersetshire, where he became intimate with Coleridge. The two friends published together the first volume of *Lyrical Ballads*, but by far the larger share in the work was Wordsworth's. In 1798 Coleridge joined Wordsworth and his sister in a tour through Germany. On returning to England, the Wordsworths settled at Grasmere, and in 1800 there appeared the second volume of *Lyrical Ballads*. In 1802 the poet received a considerable addition to his fortune which enabled him to marry, and henceforth devote himself entirely to poetry. He attempted many forms of poetical composition. His principal longer works are *The Prelude* and *The Excursion;* besides these, he wrote *The White Doe of Rylstone*, *Peter Bell*, *The Waggoner*, *Laodamia*, and many lyrics and sonnets. He wrote occasionally in prose on politics and criticism, and produced one dramatic piece, *The Borderers*. In 1843 he was made Poet Laureate, and seven years later he died at Rydal Mount, near Grasmere, where he had been settled since 1813. He had just completed his eightieth year.

Both of Wordsworth's parents died when he was a **boy**, and his genius owes little to them, and a good deal to the somewhat risky mode of education to which he was subjected. When attending school in Lancashire, he used to board in the house of one of the villagers, and out of school hours he was absolutely his own master. His spare time was spent, not in silent meditation, but in vigorous outdoor exercise—skating, rowing, bird's-nesting. It was at this period of his life that his passion for nature and natural beauty was formed. He became familiar with all the moods and aspects of the Lake Country hills and dales; and his manner of living in close intercourse with the cottager class enabled him to understand and appreciate their sterling qualities, so often afterwards embodied in his verse. Among them he formed his ideas of 'Equality,' which were so greatly emphasised in later years by the French Revolution. He was, indeed, already in close communion with Man and Nature, his two chief poetical themes.

His **Cambridge** career did little for him beyond enabling him to become deeply read in English literature. At this time he first attempted original composition in *An Evening Walk*, which was published in 1793. The most remarkable influence of his life began when in 1791 he paid a visit to France, and became intimate with several of the leading French patriots. He was then a republican, heart and soul. All his sympathy and all his enthusiasm were so entirely with the French people that he accepted the excesses of the 'Terror' as necessary evils of the time, and was bitterly distressed when England declared war against France. He afterwards made a complete change of front. Love of liberty had aroused his devotion to France, 'rightly struggling to be free.' The same love of liberty caused him to repudiate her schemes of conquest and military tyranny. He became, and to the end of his life remained, an ardent patriot and supporter of England's established constitution. His poems, and especially his sonnets, show

most clearly the influence which, in one way and another, the French Revolution exercised over him.

Much mental unhappiness followed the shattering of his republican ideals. From this depression he was rescued by the cheering presence of his sister **Dorothy**, who was now living with him, and by his friendship with Coleridge, whom he had first met in the autumn of 1795. The two poets shared a feeling against the artificial mode of expression prevalent in the poetry of the day. To give utterance to that feeling a plan was formed, whereby two sets of poems should be written, the one on supernatural subjects, the other on incidents of ordinary life. Coleridge was assigned the former, and Wordsworth the latter. Both sets alike were to be written in a style unadorned with the meretricious poetic diction of the day. The result was *Lyrical Ballads*, which appeared in 1798, and was received with contempt and abuse, for the simplicity of the style was entirely opposed to the prevailing taste.

His tour in Germany left but little impression on Wordsworth's mind. On his return to England he **married**, and the happiness of his home life, so far from inducing lack of literary energy, seems to have strengthened his poetic powers and inspired his genius. It was now that, considering his period of preparation to be over, he seriously began his poetical life; and from this time outside events had but little influence on his work. With advancing years his Toryism became more pronounced; the meannesses of expression which occasionally escape him become rarer; and he loses something of his early vigour. Otherwise his opinions and the qualities of his style remain unchanged.

The main point in the character of Wordsworth which bears upon his poetry is his steady determination of purpose. This enabled him to continue true to the ideals of poetry which he had set before him, in spite of nearly thirty years of adverse criticism and neglect. He finally triumphed, accomplishing the task of 'creating the taste by which he was to be enjoyed.'

PART II.—GENERAL CRITICISM

'*Two Voices are there*'

WORDSWORTH had one main poetical purpose, but two poetical manners. These manners are so entirely different from one another that it becomes necessary to give two extracts from his poems, if the reader is to be enabled to understand his peculiar merits and demerits.

I.—THE POET'S AIM

In our selections the poet's aim is to illustrate 'the manner in which our feelings and ideas are associated in a state of excitement'—'to follow the fluxes and refluxes of the mind when agitated by the great and simple affections of our nature.'

(*a*) In the first piece he tells a tale to illustrate the effect which the imagination may have upon the physical frame. He claims for all his poetry, as a distinction, the possession of a *worthy purpose*, even though at the outset the purpose was not plain to his own mind. However, in *Goody Blake and Harry Gill* the *aim* is clear enough. He wishes 'to draw attention to the truth that the power of human imagination is sufficient to produce such changes, even in our physical nature, as might almost appear miraculous.' We may conceive that this theme would appeal with especial force to Wordsworth, in whose being imagination played so large a part.

(*b*) In the second selection Wordsworth urges the virtue of resignation, and reads a lesson against love that is too unrestrained and unreasoning. This theme again would appeal to a sensible hard-headed North-countryman, such as Wordsworth was. His regard for law and duty would naturally incline him to disapprove of 'rebellious passion'

and 'ungovernable love,' and accordingly he makes the gods mete out to Laodamia due punishment for being 'all too weak in *reason*, in self-government too slow.'

Such is the particular aim in each of these poems, subject to the general purpose of giving immediate pleasure to the poet's readers by exciting their sympathies with joy or grief or other primary sensations of the mind.

II.—Was the Aim successful?

(*a*) Wordsworth vouches for the fact that the story in *Goody Blake and Harry Gill* is true. We may accept his statement; but, from the manner in which the subject is treated, the reader would hardly have formed this opinion for himself. No doubt, the almost supernatural effect of mind over body is a worthy subject for a poem; but unless the manner suits the matter, the result must be unsatisfactory. If any poem needs a solemn and dignified treatment, it is one which speaks of the miracles of nature. If it is not *impressive*, it might as well never have been written. *Goody Blake and Harry Gill* is written in the elaborately simple and babyish style which shows Wordsworth at his worst. The manner does not suit the subject of the poem, consequently there can be no *impressiveness*, and the purpose of the poem fails. The subject approaches so nearly to the ridiculous that a very careful treatment would be required to avoid bathos. Wordsworth could have treated it adequately if his judgment had not been led astray, as it so often was, by strained efforts towards simplicity and directness.

(*b*) In *Laodamia* we have a specimen of Wordsworth at his best. He takes a noble subject, thoroughly in agreement with his own modes of thought, and treats it in a noble manner. His object is to show the folly of passion let loose, even when the passion is one of the most amiable in human nature—that of wifely love.

The purpose is admirably attained. It is true that

Wordsworth was at first undecided as to the manner in which his heroine was to be punished for her 'passion driven to excess,' and that in the first form more 'weak pity' was admitted than was thoroughly consistent with the purpose. The original form of lines 158 *sqq.* was as follows :—

> Ah, judge her gently who so deeply loved!
> Her, who, in reason's spite, *yet without crime*,
> Was in a trance of passion thus removed;
> Delivered from the galling yoke of time
> And these frail elements—to gather flowers
> Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.

But in the later shape the severe lesson is driven home, and the poem remains a monument of Wordsworth's sterner philosophic creed.

III.—Was the Aim in Accordance with the Fundamental Principles of his Art?

To enlighten the understandings and heighten the affections of his readers by tracing for them the ebb and flow of human emotions is the noblest of a poet's tasks. And it is all the more to Wordsworth's credit that he attempted to do this by poetry of a style which he knew must be unpopular, but in the future of which he had the justest confidence. 'I distinctly foresaw,' he says, 'what you and my other friends would have to encounter in defending me. But trouble not yourself about their (the poems) present reception; of what moment is that compared with what, I trust, is their destiny?—to console the afflicted; to add sunshine to daylight by making the happy happier; to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think, to feel, and therefore to become more actively and securely virtuous.'

Essay-Subject :—'The Sublime and the Ridiculous.'

PART III.—TECHNICAL CRITICISM

I.—Elements of Style

1. *Vocabulary.*—Wordsworth's vocabulary varies with his manner. In his earlier 'Lyrical Ballad' manner there is a remarkable absence of Latin-derived words. Thus in our first selection the two opening stanzas contain hardly a single word other than of Saxon origin. His more elaborate style is full of not merely words of Latin origin, but English words retaining their original Latin meaning.[1] It is natural that such words should be numerous in *Laodamia*, the idea of which was suggested by Virgil. Wordsworth's vocabulary is marvellously copious. Even when he has purged it carefully from all those stock poetical phrases of the day, to which he applies the term 'poetic diction,' there remains enough to amply express the most complex feelings of his mind.

2. *Sentence and Paragraph.*—Wordsworth made direct expression so much his object that one rarely meets a compound sentence in his poetry. He manifests care in carrying the idea contained in the end of one stanza on to the beginning of the next. This gives a satisfactory completeness to the whole poem.

3. *Adornment.*—With direct expression for his chief aim, Wordsworth has little deliberate adornment. All metrical devices he shunned. Metaphor and simile we find, often splendid, and always just and exact. But, on the whole, adornment is not an element of Wordsworth's style.

II.—Intellectual Qualities of Style

1. *Clearness and Simplicity.*—Except in a few isolated cases, Wordsworth is always clear and always simple. In his early manner these qualities are indulged in to excess, and become—the one, mere minuteness of detail; the

[1] Line 59, redundant; l. 65, conscious; l. 169, spiry; l. 172, subject.

other, over-familiarity of diction. But in his more exalted strain the simplicity is no longer babyish, but grandly and severely dignified; and the clearness is gained by concise expression of sharp-cut thought. In a sense *Laodamia* is quite as simple and clear as *Goody Blake.* The difference which we notice is due to the fact that in *Laodamia* Wordsworth, in spite of himself, was using 'poetic diction' —not the cut-and-dried phraseology which he rightly condemned, but the appropriate expression of high poetic thought. In *Goody Blake*, on the other hand, he strives to suit his language to the lowliness of the subject, but only succeeds in making it childish.

III.—Emotional Qualities of Style

1. *Strength.*—*Earnestness* was Wordsworth's peculiar strength, and by the possession of this quality of style he always at least commands respect. It was the outcome of his thorough belief in himself and his notion of a poet's duty. When exercised upon a worthy subject, it is capable at any moment of rising to sublimity—a quality which no English poet, except Milton, can claim to possess. But, again, when used in the description of some trivial incident in common life, it heightens the impression that Wordsworth is trying to *force* a poetical effect.

2. *Pathos.*—Wordsworth possesses in a very high degree the power of moving the heart by simple unaffected narrative; but his total lack of humour prevents him from seeing clearly the line which separates the pathetic from the commonplace. A good example of this is seen in lines 89-112 of our first selection.

IV.—Kind of Poem

Both selections are, in form, *short* narrative poems, though *Laodamia* contains more reflection than narration. The short narrative was a favourite with Wordsworth. In longer narrative his strength seems to flag, and his lapses into bathos are more numerous.

GOODY BLAKE AND HARRY GILL

A TRUE STORY

Oh! what's the matter? what's the matter?
What is't that ails young Harry Gill?
That evermore his teeth they chatter,
Chatter, chatter, chatter still!
Of waistcoats Harry has no lack,
Good duffle grey, and flannel fine;
He has a blanket on his back,
And coats enough to smother nine.

In March, December, and in July,
'Tis all the same with Harry Gill;
The neighbours tell, and tell you truly,
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
At night, at morning, and at noon,
'Tis all the same with Harry Gill;
Beneath the sun, beneath the moon,
His teeth they chatter, chatter still!

Young Harry was a lusty drover,
And who so stout of limb as he?
His cheeks were red as ruddy clover;
His voice was like the voice of three.

Old Goody Blake was old and poor ;
Ill fed she was, and thinly clad ;
And any man who passed her door
Might see how poor a hut she had.

All day she spun in her poor dwelling :
And then her three hours' work at night,
Alas ! 'twas hardly worth the telling,
It would not pay for candle-light.
Remote from sheltered village green
On a hill's northern side she dwelt,
Where from sea-blasts the hawthorns lean,
And hoary dews are slow to melt.

By the same fire to boil their pottage,
Two poor old dames, as I have known,
Will often live in one small cottage ;
But she, poor woman ! housed alone.
'Twas well enough when summer came,
The long, warm, lightsome summer-day,
Then at her door the *canty* Dame
Would sit, as any linnet, gay.

But when the ice our streams did fetter,
Oh then how her old bones would shake !
You would have said, if you had met her,
'Twas a hard time for Goody Blake.
Her evenings then were dull and dead :
Sad case it was, as you may think,
For very cold to go to bed ;
And then for cold not sleep a wink.

O joy for her! whene'er in winter
The winds at night had made a rout;
And scattered many a lusty splinter
And many a rotten bough about.
Yet never had she, well or sick,
As every man who knew her says,
A pile beforehand, turf or stick,
Enough to warm her for three days.

Now, when the frost was past enduring,
And made her poor old bones to ache,
Could anything be more alluring
Than an old hedge to Goody Blake?
And, now and then, it must be said,
When her old bones were cold and chill,
She left her fire, or left her bed,
To seek the hedge of Harry Gill.

Now Harry he had long suspected
This trespass of old Goody Blake;
And vowed that she should be detected—
That he on her would vengeance take.
And oft from his warm fire he'd go,
And to the fields his road would take,
And there, at night, in frost and snow,
He watched to seize old Goody Blake.

And once, behind a rick of barley,
Thus looking out did Harry stand:
The moon was full and shining clearly,
And crisp with frost the stubble land.

—He hears a noise—he's all awake—
Again !—on tip-toe down the hill
He softly creeps—'Tis Goody Blake ;
She's at the hedge of Harry Gill.

Right glad was he when he beheld her :
Stick after stick did Goody pull :
He stood behind a bush of elder,
Till she had filled her apron full.
When with her load she turned about,
The by-way back again to take,
He started forward with a shout,
And sprang upon poor Goody Blake.

And fiercely by the arm he took her,
And by the arm he held her fast,
And fiercely by the arm he shook her,
And cried, ' I've caught you, then, at last ! '
Then Goody, who had nothing said,
Her bundle from her lap let fall ;
And kneeling on the sticks she prayed
To God that is the judge of all.

She prayed, her wither'd hand uprearing,
While Harry held her by the arm—
' God ! who art never out of hearing,
Oh, may he never more be warm ! '
The cold, cold moon above her head,
Thus on her knees did Goody pray ;
Young Harry heard what she had said :
And icy cold he turned away.

He went complaining all the morrow
That he was cold and very chill:
His face was gloom, his heart was sorrow;
Alas! that day for Harry Gill!
That day he wore a riding-coat,
But not a whit the warmer he:
Another was on Thursday brought,
And ere the Sabbath he had three.

'Twas all in vain, a useless matter—
And blankets were about him pinned;
Yet still his jaws and teeth they clatter,
Like a loose casement in the wind.
And Harry's flesh it fell away;
And all who see him say, 'tis plain
That, live as long as live he may,
He never will be warm again.

No word to any man he utters,
A-bed or up, to young or old;
But ever to himself he mutters,
'Poor Harry Gill is very cold.'
A-bed or up, by night or day;
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
Now think, ye farmers all, I pray,
Of Goody Blake and Harry Gill!

LAODAMIA

'WITH sacrifice before the rising morn
Vows have I made by fruitless hope inspired;
And from the infernal gods, 'mid shades forlorn
Of night, my slaughtered lord have I required:
Celestial pity I again implore;—
Restore him to my sight—great Jove, restore!'

So speaking, and by fervent love endowed
With faith, the suppliant heavenward lifts her hands;
While, like the sun emerging from a cloud,
Her countenance brightens—and her eye expands;
Her bosom heaves and spreads, her stature grows;
And she expects the issue in repose.

O terror! what hath she perceived?—O joy!
What doth she look on?—whom doth she behold?
Her hero slain upon the beach of Troy?
His vital presence—his corporeal mould?
It is—if sense deceive her not—'tis he!
And a god leads him—wingèd Mercury!

Mild Hermes spake—and touched her with his wand
That calms all fear: 'Such grace hath crowned thy prayer,
Laodamia! that at Jove's command
Thy husband walks the paths of upper air:

He comes to tarry with thee three hours' space ;
Accept the gift, behold him face to face ! '

Forth sprang the impassioned queen her lord to clasp !
Again that consummation she essayed ;
But unsubstantial form eludes her grasp
As often as that eager grasp was made.
The phantom parts—but parts to re-unite,
And re-assume his place before her sight.

' Protesiláus, lo ! thy guide is gone !
Confirm, I pray, the vision with thy voice :
This is our palace,—yonder is thy throne ;
Speak, and the floor thou tread'st on will rejoice.
Not to appal me have the gods bestowed
This precious boon,—and blest a sad abode.'

' Great Jove, Laodamia ! doth not leave
His gifts imperfect :—spectre though I be,
I am not sent to scare thee or deceive ;
But in reward of thy fidelity.
And something also did my worth obtain ;
For fearless virtue bringeth boundless gain.

' Thou know'st, the Delphic oracle foretold
That the first Greek who touched the Trojan strand
Should die ; but me the threat could not withhold :
A generous cause a victim did demand ;
And forth I leapt upon the sandy plain ;
A self-devoted chief—by Hector slain.'

'Supreme of heroes—bravest, noblest, best!
Thy matchless courage I bewail no more,
Which then, when tens of thousands were deprest
By doubt, propelled thee to the fatal shore;
Thou found'st—and I forgive thee—here thou art—
A nobler counsellor than my poor heart.

'But thou, though capable of sternest deed,
Wert kind as resolute, and good as brave;
And he, whose power restores thee, hath decreed
That thou should'st cheat the malice of the grave:
Redundant are thy locks, thy lips as fair
As when their breath enriched Thessalian air.

'No spectre greets me,—no vain shadow this;
Come, blooming hero, place thee by my side!
Give, on this well-known couch, one nuptial kiss
To me, this day, a second time thy bride!'
Jove frowned in heaven: the conscious Parcæ[1] threw
Upon those roseate lips a Stygian[2] hue.

'This visage tells thee that my doom is past:
Know, virtue were not virtue if the joys
Of sense were able to return as fast
And surely as they vanish. Earth destroys
Those raptures duly—Erebus[3] disdains:
Calm pleasures there abide—majestic pains.

'Be taught, O faithful consort, to control
Rebellious passion: for the gods approve
The depth, and not the tumult, of the soul;
A fervent, not ungovernable love.

Thy transports moderate; and meekly mourn
When I depart, for brief is my sojourn.'

'Ah, wherefore? did not Hercules by force
Wrest from the guardian monster[4] of the tomb
Alcestis, a reanimated corse
Given back to dwell on earth in vernal bloom?
Medea's spells dispersed the weight of years,
And Æson stood a youth 'mid youthful peers.

'The gods to us are merciful—and they
Yet further may relent: for mightier far
Than strength of nerve and sinew, or the sway
Of magic potent over sun and star,
Is love, though oft to agony distrest,
And though his favourite seat be feeble woman's breast.

'But if thou goest I follow—' 'Peace!' he said,—
She looked upon him and was calmed and cheered;
The ghastly colour from his lips had fled;
In his deportment, shape, and mien, appeared
Elysian beauty, melancholy grace,
Brought from a pensive, though a happy place.

He spake of love, such love as spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure;
No fears to beat away—no strife to heal—
The past unsighed for, and the future sure;
Spake of heroic arts in graver mood
Revived, with finer harmony pursued;

Of all that is most beauteous—imaged there
In happier beauty ; more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purpureal gleams ;
Climes which the sun, who sheds the brightest day
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

Yet there the soul shall enter which hath earned
That privilege by virtue.—'Ill,' said he,
'The end of man's existence I discerned,
Who from ignoble games and revelry
Could draw, when we had parted, vain delight,
While tears were thy best pastime, day and night ;

'And while my youthful peers before my eyes
(Each hero following his peculiar bent)
Prepared themselves for glorious enterprise
By martial sports,—or, seated in the tent,
Chieftains and kings in council were detained ;
What time the fleet at Aulis lay enchained.

'The wished-for wind was given :—I then revolved
The oracle, upon the silent sea ;
And, if no worthier led the way, resolved
That, of a thousand vessels, mine should be
The foremost prow in pressing to the strand,—
Mine the first blood that tinged the Trojan sand.

'Yet bitter, oft-times bitter, was the pang
When of thy loss I thought, beloved wife !
On thee too fondly did my memory hang,
And on the joys we shared in mortal life,—

The paths which we had trod—these fountains,
flowers;
My new-planned cities, and unfinished towers.

'But, should suspense permit the foe to cry,
"Behold, they tremble!—haughty their array,
Yet of their number no one dares to die"?—
In soul I swept the indignity away:
Old frailties then recurred:—but lofty thought,
In act embodied, my deliverance wrought.

'And thou, though strong in love, art all too weak
In reason, in self-government too slow;
I counsel thee by fortitude to seek
Our blest re-union in the shades below.
The invisible world with thee hath sympathised;
Be thy affections raised and solemnised.

'Learn by a mortal yearning to ascend
Towards a higher object.—Love was given,
Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for that end:
For this the passion to excess was driven—
That self might be annulled: her bondage prove
The fetters of a dream, opposed to love.'

Aloud she shrieked! For Hermes reappears!
Round the dear shade she would have clung—'tis
vain:
The hours are past—too brief had they been years;
And him no mortal effort can detain:
Swift, toward the realms that know not earthly day,
He through the portal takes his silent way,
And on the palace floor a lifeless corse she lay.

By no weak pity might the gods be moved ;
She who thus perished not without the crime
Of lovers that in reason's spite have loved,
Was doomed to wander in a grosser clime,
Apart from happy ghosts—that gather flowers
Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.

—Yet tears to human suffering are due ;
And mortal hopes defeated and o'erthrown
Are mourned by man, and not by man alone,
As fondly he believes.—Upon the side
Of Hellespont (such faith was entertained)
A knot of spiry trees for ages grew
From out the tomb of him for whom she died ;
And ever, when such stature they had gained
That Ilium's walls were subject to their view,
The trees' tall summits withered at the sight ;
A constant interchange of growth and blight !

NOTES

1. **Parcæ,** three Fates—Clotho, who span, Lachesis, who measured, and Atropos, who cut the 'fate.'

2. **Stygian.** Styx was a river of Hades.

3. **Erebus,** the pit of nether darkness, on the way to Hades.

4. **Monster,** Cerberus. The Fates granted to Admetus deliverance from death, if his wife—Alcestis—would die for him, which she did ; but Hercules brought her back from Hades.

SCOTT

PART I.—HIS LIFE

WALTER SCOTT was born in Edinburgh on 15th August 1771. He was the son of a Writer to the Signet, and was descended from the Scotts of Harden, who were of the noble race of Buccleuch. His early boyhood was spent in his grandfather's house near Kelso, in the heart of the Border district. He was educated at the High School and University of Edinburgh, and was called to the Scottish Bar in 1792. He practised with fair success, but very soon began to turn his attention seriously to literature. He published several translations from the German, and brought out his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, which contained some original contributions. He was appointed Sheriff of Selkirkshire in 1804, and took up his residence at Ashestiel, on the banks of the Tweed. He there produced *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* in 1805, *Marmion* in 1808, *The Lady of the Lake* in 1810, *The Vision of Don Roderick* in 1811, *The Bridal of Triermain* and *Rokeby* in 1813. At Abbotsford were written *The Lord of the Isles* in 1815, and *Harold the Dauntless* in 1817; but Scott's first novel, *Waverley*, had appeared before their publication, and from this time he ceased to write poetry. In 1820 he was created a Baronet by George IV. The commercial crisis of 1826, combined with bad management, proved the ruin of the publishing firm of the Ballantynes, in which

Scott was a partner. He made a noble effort to clear off his share of the liabilities with his pen, and almost succeeded in doing so, but died of overwork on 21st September 1832. It will be noticed that, while Scott's life coincides with the First, or Georgian, period of Nineteenth-Century Literature, his poetical life, roughly speaking, began and ended with the Peninsular War.

The fact that Scott could claim **descent** from a noble and ancient clan had considerable influence on his poetry. It inspired him with that regard for feudalism and chivalry which we perceive everywhere through his writings. It inclined him towards Toryism in politics, and consequently kept him free from the more violent influences of the French Revolution. It emphasised his historical and antiquarian tastes, to which the *story* of his poems owes so much. It also disposed him to make rather too much of his character of 'gentleman,' as distinct from that of 'author'; and this may partly account for the occasional carelessness and want of polish which mark much of his poetry.

The accidental circumstances of weak health and slight lameness sent him to spend his **childhood** in the picturesque Border region. By this his natural taste for beautiful scenery, stirring ballad, and quaint legend was fostered and encouraged. He was also inspired with that wholesome love of all athletic exercises, of vigorous action, of horses and dogs, which breathes through every line of his works. His devotion to the Border, formed in childhood, never failed. When practising law in Edinburgh, his vacations were passed in roaming through it; his manhood was spent there; and it was there that an uneasy longing drove him, when he felt that death was at hand. It is to the influence of the Border that we owe all that is most characteristic in the poetry of Scott.

Scott's regular **education** at school and college affected his poetical genius but little. He was by no means a distinguished student at the University. He had no

intimate acquaintance with Latin or Greek. Amongst foreign literatures, he was only familiar with that of Germany. In his early days at the law, he had studied German with some attention, and his translations of German ballads were sufficiently appreciated by M. G. Lewis to induce that author to ask Scott for contributions to the *Tales of Wonder*. At all times Scott had been an eager devourer of ballads, legends, and mediæval history, and he began to follow the true bent of his genius when he produced his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. By this work he gained considerable reputation as a poet and as an antiquarian. But though the literature of the past was his favourite study, he by no means neglected the poetry of his contemporaries, and he himself acknowledges that the *form* of his romantic poems was in part suggested by the example of Coleridge.

Scott, as we have said, always took great interest in athletics and sport of every kind. The study of war was his delight, and during this part of his life at or near **Edinburgh**, he acted as quartermaster of a volunteer corps of cavalry. It is to this military instinct that we owe the intense fervour of his battle scenes, to which 'Christopher North' of the *Quarterly Review* refers when he says: 'A cut and thrust style without any flourish, Scott's style when his blood was up, and the first words came like a vanguard impatient for battle.'

When he went to live at **Ashestiel** as Sheriff of Selkirkshire, he was, to a great extent, cut off from Edinburgh society. But he had abundant leisure, and his duties brought him into contact with all sorts and conditions of men. He was in the midst of his beloved Border, and the stirring events of the day must have stimulated his imagination, as they certainly fired his patriotism. Every surrounding circumstance, in fact, helped to successfully develop the vein which he now struck in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. He had been asked by Lady Dalkeith to write a *ballad* on the old legend of Gilpin Horner. He

found the ballad growing under his hands into a metrical romance, and its publication at once raised its author to a place among the foremost poets of the day. He continued to work the vein he had struck. His second romance, *Marmion*, is undoubtedly his greatest; and his third, *The Lady of the Lake*, possesses very high merit. But after this his strength seems to have flagged, and in all his other poems a distinct falling off is visible. As the popularity of his work began to decline, Byron's poetry became the fashion. It is characteristic of the total absence of literary jealousy, which marked Scott's nature, that he cheerfully acquiesced in the popular verdict. He ceased to write poetry, and devoted himself to that branch of literature in which, during his own time, he admitted no rival.

Scott's religious views, which were liberal and tolerant on the whole, are never thrust forward in his poetry; but we may trace there the general outline of his character, from the enthusiasm for everything noble and chivalrous, the hatred of everything mean or cowardly, and the wide charity which prevents him making even his worst villains wholly bad. His domestic life and social relations were so entirely happy that his naturally healthy and hopeful disposition entered without alloy into his poetry. There is not a trace of either melancholy or deep philosophical reflection. Scott's life after the year 1817 has no bearing whatever on his poetry.

PART II.—GENERAL CRITICISM

It is comparatively easy to select from Scott's longer poems a passage characteristic of his style. He had one poetical manner, and one only, in narrative verse; and the strength of his narrative lies rather in the excellence of the episodes than in the logical sequence and probability of the plot. Hence little violence is required to remove any particular passage from its context.

I.—Aim in the Poem

Scott's aim in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, as in all his revivals of ancient metrical romances, was the same as that of his forerunners in the art—the minstrels, bards, and trouvères—to tell a tale of chivalry; and he himself informs us that he wished to choose for the telling such a tale as would lend itself to descriptions of scenery and of ancient manners and customs. He felt that by this means he could best bring out the stores of antiquarian learning and the images of external nature with which his mind was filled. The dignity of a regular poem did not, as he thought, allow such patchwork treatment. Accordingly, he adopted the plan and outward form of those old romances, of which he found the models in the pages of *Percy's Reliques*, and among the cottagers along the Border, with whom he had been from boyhood a welcome guest. He was thus enabled to vary his measure, and introduce machinery from popular belief, 'which would have seemed puerile in a poem which did not partake of the rudeness of the old ballad or metrical romance.' Scott saw clearly the facilities which such a treatment afforded, and he was careful to avoid the principal faults of the old ballad-mongers and romanticists — their prosaic detail and monotony. By various devices, to be discussed later, Scott minimises, if he does not altogether get rid of, these blemishes.

II.—Was the Aim successful?

The poet's object then was threefold: (1) To tell a tale; (2) to work in description of manners; (3) to work in descriptions of scenery.

1. *The Story.*—As regards the mere telling of a tale, Scott has no equal in English literature. His power of invention and expression was extraordinary. The interest of the story is carried on in remarkably well-sustained fashion, considering the length of the poem. Scott had

no power of analysing character. His character-drawing is done in a dashing scene-painting manner, with bold, broad outlines, but no subtle delineation. This is extremely suitable to the style of poem and acts as a positive help to the course of the narrative. In none of his poems does the story move more vigorously onward than in his first—*The Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

2. *The Manners.* — With regard to description of manners, Scott has succeeded beyond what one could expect, but not completely. No modern can transport himself so absolutely into the past as to give a perfect description of the life of that past. Scott was as thoroughly familiar with the details of feudal life as any man could be who had gained his knowledge from books. But task learning alone is insufficient for thoroughly life-like representation of a past epoch. We often find that Scott is unnaturally theatrical. Sometimes, from his desire to introduce local colour, he becomes pedantic, though most of his pedantry escapes into the notes. But his picturesque grouping and vivid imagination do much to redeem these faults.

3. *The Scenery.* — Scott's descriptions of scenery and scenic effects are of two kinds. The one is natural and unstudied, simply bringing before the reader's mind the main features of beauty in sky, or stream, or moorland. The other smells more of the lamp, and, though undeniably impressive, displays some straining after effect. His best descriptions are always those in which the scenery is closely associated with some stirring historical event.

III.—How far does his Object accord with the Fundamental Principles of his Art?

Narrative is the basis of all the earliest and greatest poetry in the world. It had fallen into disuse before Scott's time in the history of English poetry. Not only did he set an example for a new school of narrative poets,

but he helped to turn the form of all other kinds of poetry in the direction of narrative. The original purpose of poetry was to tell a story in such fashion as to stir the emotions of the heart. This was what was achieved by Homer and Virgil, and what has also been achieved by Scott.

PART III.—TECHNICAL CRITICISM

I.—Elements of Style

1. *Vocabulary.*—Scott's vocabulary is copious, if not remarkably choice. His command of language, ample for the purposes for which it was employed, would probably have failed in a poem of a more philosophical description. But for poems of action it is unsurpassed. His want of choiceness must be attributed partly to his dangerous fluency, and partly to the enticing ease and flexibility of his metre. In the main, his language is the prose language of his day. But, in order to fit his vocabulary more closely to his subject, he uses in *The Lay* many peculiar or obsolete words, found in the old romances,[1] and adopts the old spelling in some of the most ordinary words.[2] He is not afraid of using technical terms.[3] The same epithet is found systematically repeated with the same noun, after the fashion of the old ballad writers.[4] Scott has a love for introducing the names of persons and places into his verse. Elsewhere than in *The Lay* we find whole stanzas that are little more than lists of names. This peculiarity is well brought out in the parody in *Rejected Addresses.*[5]

[1] Canto i. stanza 22, wightest; stanza 25, barbican, basnet, Peel; stanza 29, barded; Canto ii. stanza 3, aventayle; stanza 6, can; stanza 19, amice.

[2] Canto i. stanza 20, Ladye; Canto ii. stanza 14, Abbaye.

[3] Canto i. stanza 31, lauds; Canto ii. stanza 9, keystone, fleur-de-lys, quatre-feuille, corbels.

[4] Canto i. stanza 22, and Canto ii. stanza 16, good at need; Canto i. stanza 22, fair.

[5] Canto i. stanzas 25 and 30.

Generally speaking, when the course of the action is most vigorous and stirring, Scott's vocabulary is fullest and freshest.

2. *Sentence, Paragraph, and Metre.*—Scott understood the art of carrying his reader along with him too well to cast his verse in long or involved sentences. Hardly any of his clauses extend beyond the couplet; many of them are contained in one line, and, except in conversations, the line is never broken in the middle. The stanza with him takes the place of blank verse paragraph, and but little art is used in its arrangement. The number of lines in each stanza is uncertain, and this method of construction is convenient, and indeed necessary, for a poet who constantly expresses changes of sense by sudden changes of metre. The metre itself is founded on that of the old ballad writers—Scotch, French, and English. But Scott saw that, by following closely his original model, he ran the risk of making the poem monotonous. He, therefore, imitating Coleridge, gave to his verse the metrical irregularity which is its chief charm. He varied the rimed octosyllabic line by an occasional Adonic of six syllables. He indulged freely in the license of substituting accentual for metrical regularity in the single line.

His other device for avoiding monotony consisted in arranging the poem in a kind of outside framework, the various cantos being joined together by a series of reflections, descriptions, or, as in the case of *The Lay*, by a subordinate story.

Adornment.—There is little adornment in Scott's poetry, except certain simple metrical devices. His language is so straightforward and plain that the simile and metaphor seem out of place, and they are rarely met with. When we do find them, they are seldom very original or striking. That in canto i. stanza 31, line 11 is not sufficiently obvious to be picturesque; that in canto ii., stanza 9 weakens the whole stanza. A kind of onomatopœia is found at canto i. stanza 24, and canto ii. stanza 6.

II.—Intellectual Qualities of Style

1. *Clearness.*—Scott's 'light-horseman stanza,' as he called it, sometimes hurries him into slightly confused expression, but the thought is always distinct and clear. He so rarely touched upon abstract questions, that there is but little merit in this. It added greatly, however, to his popularity. He has written few lines about the meaning of which any doubt has arisen. Lines 5-10 of stanza 5, canto ii., are quite ungrammatical and impossible to analyse, but their meaning is as apparent as day.

2. *Simplicity.*—Scott's use of obsolete words, his technicalities, his innumerable, historical, and topographical allusions, his occasional diffuseness, debar him from any claim to simplicity in its fullest sense. The mere fact that his poems need notes and glossary shows this. Moreover, he pays much attention to minute detail, and where there is minute detail there can be no simplicity, though there may be exactness.

III.—Emotional Qualities of Style

1. *Strength.*—The special form of the quality of strength in Scott's poetry is *animation.* The first 200 lines of our selection give an excellent example of this. He occasionally rises to *splendour.* But his splendid passages, as we have before said, are apt to be marred by a somewhat theatrical touch. The Blood-red Cross on the Wizard's grave is distinctly stagey. But Scott's purely animated passages can only be approached by parts of the *Lays of Ancient Rome.* Animation may not be one of the highest or rarest of the emotional qualities of style, but it is certainly the one which can produce the most pleasure in the mind of the reader.

2. *Pathos.*—It would be rash to say that the author of *The Heart of Midlothian* had not supreme power of pathos, but in his poetry it is rarely seen. His own nature was so

buoyant and cheerful that he did not care to purify the minds of his readers with pity. If he describes scenes of misery, the misery is always joined to some circumstances of excitement or horror which leave no room in the mind for pleasing melancholy.

IV.—The Kind of Composition

The poem is of a kind peculiarly Scott's own. It is founded, both in form and spirit, upon the old metrical romances of all descriptions and all nations—the *Rime of Sir Thopas* grafted on to *Chevy Chace* and *Jamie Telfer*. It is distinguished by exactly those merits which Scott himself assigns it in his preface. Being sung by one of the last minstrels, it may be supposed, he says, to possess the refinement of modern poetry with the simplicity and naturalness of the original model. These are exactly what it does possess. The ardent chivalric feeling that prevails in the foolish productions, of which *Sir Thopas* is a specimen, is retained. The desperate dulness is removed. The vigour and freshness of *Chevy Chace* are retained; the ludicrous rime and the occasional bathos are removed. The remarkable fact about this new style of poetry is that it came into the world, as it were, by accident. If it had not been for Lady Dalkeith's commission, before referred to, Scott might have continued to write more translations from the German and more contributions to *Tales of Wonder*. But in what was at first meant to be a slight elaboration upon a Border ballad, his real strength was given full play; and the result appeared, not merely in *The Lay* and *Marmion*, but also in *Ivanhoe* and *Quentin Durward*.

Essay-Subjects:—(1) 'Scott's "gallant ruffians"'; (2) 'The Romance of the Scottish Border.'

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL

CANTO I. 20 TO II. 21

I. 20. THE Ladye forgot her purpose high,
One moment, and no more;
One moment gazed with a mother's eye,
As she paused at the arched door:
Then, from amid the armed train,
She called to her William of Deloraine.

21. A stark moss-trooping Scott was he,
As e'er couched Border lance by knee:
Through Solway sands, through Tarras moss,
Blindfold, he knew the paths to cross;
By wily turns, by desperate bounds,
Had baffled Percy's best bloodhounds:
In Eske, or Liddel, fords were none,
But he would ride them, one by one;
Alike to him was time or tide,
December's snow, or July's pride;
Alike to him was tide or time,
Moonless midnight, or matin prime:
Steady of heart, and stout of hand,

As ever drove prey from Cumberland ;
Five times outlawed had he been,
By England's king, and Scotland's queen.

22. 'Sir William of Deloraine, good at need,
Mount thee on the wightest steed ;
Spare not to spur, nor stint to ride,
Until thou come to fair Tweedside ;
And in Melrose's holy pile
Seek thou the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.
Greet the father well from me ;
Say that the fated hour is come,
And to-night he shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb :
For this will be St. Michael's night,
And, though stars be dim, the moon is bright ;
And the Cross, of bloody red,
Will point to the grave of the mighty dead.

23. 'What he gives thee, see thou keep ;
Stay not thou for food or sleep :
Be it scroll, or be it book,
Into it, Knight, thou must not look ;
If thou readest, thou art lorn !
Better hadst thou ne'er been born.'

24. 'O swiftly can speed my dapple-gray steed,
Which drinks of the Teviot clear ;
Ere break of day,' the Warrior 'gan say,
'Again will I be here :
And safer by none may thy errand be done,
Than, noble dame, by me ;

Letter nor line know I never a one,
Were't my neck-verse [1] at Hairibee.'

25. Soon in his saddle sate he fast,
And soon the steep descent he passed,
Soon crossed the sounding barbican,
And soon the Teviot side he won.
Eastward the wooded path he rode,
Green hazels o'er his basnet nod ;
He passed the Peel of Goldiland,
And crossed old Borthwick's roaring strand ;
Dimly he viewed the Moat-hill's mound,
Where Druid shades still flitted round :
In Hawick twinkled many a light ;
Behind him soon they set in night ;
And soon he spurred his courser keen
Beneath the tower of Hazeldean.

26. The clattering hoofs the watchmen mark :
' Stand, ho ! thou courier of the dark.'
' For Branksome, ho ! ' the knight rejoined,
And left the friendly tower behind.
He turned him now from Teviotside,
And, guided by the tinkling rill,
Northward the dark ascent did ride,
And gained the moor at Horsliehill ;
Broad on the left before him lay,
For many a mile, the Roman way.

27. A moment now he slacked his speed,
A moment breathed his panting steed ;
Drew saddle-girth and corslet-band,

And loosened in the sheath his brand.
On Minto-crags the moonbeams glint,
Where Barnhill hewed his bed of flint ;
Who flung his outlawed limbs to rest,
Where falcons hang their giddy nest,
Mid cliffs, from whence his eagle eye
For many a league his prey could spy ;
Cliffs, doubling, on their echoes borne,
The terrors of the robber's horn ;
Cliffs, which, for many a later year,
The warbling Doric reed shall hear,
When some sad swain shall teach the grove,
Ambition is no cure for love !

28. Unchallenged, thence passed Deloraine,
To ancient Riddel's fair domain,
Where Aill, from mountains freed,
Down from the lakes did raving come ;
Each wave was crested with tawny foam,
Like the mane of a chestnut steed.
In vain ! no torrent, deep or broad,
Might bar the bold moss-trooper's road.

29. At the first plunge the horse sunk low,
And the water broke o'er the saddlebow ;
Above the foaming tide, I ween,
Scarce half the charger's neck was seen ;
For he was barded from counter to tail,
And the rider was armed complete in mail
Never heavier man and horse
Stemmed a midnight torrent's force.
The warrior's very plume, I say,

Was daggled by the dashing spray ;
Yet, through good heart, and Our Ladye's grace,
At length he gained the landing-place.

30. Now Bowden Moor the marchman won,
And sternly shook his plumed head,
As glanced his eye o'er Halidon ;
For on his soul the slaughter red
Of that unhallowed morn arose,
When first the Scott and Carr were foes ;
When royal James beheld the fray,
Prize to the victor of the day ;
When Home and Douglas, in the van,
Bore down Buccleuch's retiring clan,
Till gallant Cessford's heart-blood dear
Reeked on dark Elliot's Border spear.

31. In bitter mood he spurred fast,
And soon the hated heath was past ;
And far beneath, in lustre wan,
Old Melros' rose, and fair Tweed ran
Like some tall rock with lichens gray,
Seemed, dimly huge, the dark Abbaye.
When Hawick he passed, had curfew rung,
Now midnight lauds were in Melrose sung.
The sound, upon the fitful gale,
In solemn wise did rise and fail,
Like that wild harp, whose magic tone
Is wakened by the winds alone.
But when Melrose he reached, 'twas silence all ;
He meetly stabled his steed in stall,
And sought the convent's lonely wall.

II. 1. If thou would'st view fair Melrose aright,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight;
For the gay beams of lightsome day
Gild, but to flout, the ruins gray.
When the broken arches are black in night,
And each shafted oriel glimmers white;
When the cold light's uncertain shower
Streams on the ruined central tower;
When buttress and buttress, alternately,
Seem framed of ebon and ivory;
When silver edges the imagery,
And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die;
When distant Tweed is heard to rave,
And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave,
Then go—but go alone the while—
Then view St. David's ruined pile;
And, home returning, soothly swear,
Was never scene so sad and fair!

2. Short halt did Deloraine make there;
Little recked he of the scene so fair:
With dagger's hilt on the wicket strong,
He struck full loud, and struck full long.
The porter hurried to the gate—
'Who knocks so loud, and knocks so late?'
'From Branksome I,' the warrior cried;
And straight the wicket opened wide:
For Branksome's chiefs had in battle stood,

To fence the rights of fair Melrose ;
And lands and livings, many a rood,
Had gifted the shrine for their souls' repose.

3. Bold Deloraine his errand said ;
The porter bent his humble head ;
With torch in hand and feet unshod,
And noiseless step, the path he trod :
The arched cloister, far and wide,
Rang to the warrior's clanking stride ;
Till, stooping low his lofty crest,
He entered the cell of the ancient priest,
And lifted his barred aventayle,
To hail the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.

4. 'The Ladye of Branksome greets thee by me ;
Says, that the fated hour is come,
And that to-night I shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb.'
From sackcloth couch the monk arose,
With toil his stiffened limbs he reared ;
A hundred years had flung their snows
On his thin locks and floating beard.

5. And strangely on the Knight looked he,
And his blue eyes gleamed wild and wide ;
'And, darest thou, Warrior! seek to see
What heaven and hell alike would hide?
My breast, in belt of iron pent,
With shirt of hair and scourge of thorn ;
For threescore years, in penance spent,
My knees those flinty stones have worn ;

Yet all too little to atone
For knowing what should ne'er be known.
Wouldst thou thy every future year
In ceaseless prayer and penance drie,
Yet wait thy latter end with fear—
Then, daring Warrior, follow me!'

6. 'Penance, father, will I none;
Prayer know I hardly one;
For mass or prayer can I rarely tarry,
Save to patter an Ave Mary,
When I ride on a Border foray:
Other prayer can I none;
So speed me my errand, and let me be gone.'—

7. Again on the Knight looked the Churchman old,
And again he sighed heavily;
For he had himself been a warrior bold,
And fought in Spain and Italy.
And he thought on the days that were long since by,
When his limbs were strong, and his courage was high:
Now, slow and faint, he led the way,
Where, cloistered round, the garden lay;
The pillared arches were over their head,
And beneath their feet were the bones of the dead.

8. Spreading herbs, and flowerets bright,
Glistened with the dew of night;

Nor herb, nor floweret, glistened there,
But was carved in the cloister-arches as fair.
The Monk gazed long on the lovely moon,
Then into the night he looked forth;
And red and bright the streamers light
Were dancing in the glowing north.
So had he seen, in fair Castile,
The youth in glittering squadrons start;
Sudden the flying jennet wheel,
And hurl the unexpected dart.
He knew, by the streamers that shot so bright,
That spirits were riding the northern light.

9. By a steel-clenched postern door,
They entered now the chancel tall;
The darkened roof rose high aloof
On pillars lofty and light and small:
The keystone, that locked each ribbed aisle,
Was a fleur-de-lys, or a quatre-feuille;
The corbels were carved grotesque and grim;
And the pillars, with clustered shafts so trim,
With base and with capital flourished around,
Seemed bundles of lances which garlands had bound.

10. Full many a scutcheon and banner, riven,
Shook to the cold night wind of heaven,
Around the screened altar's pale;
And there the dying lamps did burn,
Before thy low and lonely urn,
O gallant Chief of Otterburne!
And thine, dark Knight of Liddesdale!

O fading honours of the dead!
O high ambition, lowly laid!

11. The moon on the east oriel shone
Through slender shafts of shapely stone,
By foliaged tracery combined;
Thou would'st have thought some fairy's hand
'Twixt poplars straight the ozier wand,
In many a freakish knot, had twined;
Then framed a spell, when the work was done,
And changed the willow-wreaths to stone.
The silver light, so pale and faint,
Showed many a prophet, and many a saint,
Whose image on the glass was dyed;
Full in the midst, his Cross of Red
Triumphant Michael brandished,
And trampled the Apostate's pride.
The moonbeam kissed the holy pane,
And threw on the pavement a bloody stain.

12. They sate them down on a marble stone,
(A Scottish monarch slept below);
Thus spoke the Monk, in solemn tone:—
'I was not always a man of woe;
For Paynim countries I have trod,
And fought beneath the Cross of God:
Now, strange to my eyes thine arms appear,
And their iron clang sounds strange to my ear.

13. 'In these fair climes it was my lot
To meet the wondrous Michael Scott,
A wizard, of such dreaded fame,

That when, in Salamanca's cave,
Him listed his magic wand to wave,
The bells would ring in Notre Dame!
Some of his skill he taught to me;
And, Warrior, I could say to thee
The words that cleft Eildon hills in three,
And bridled the Tweed with a curb of stone:
But to speak them were a deadly sin;
And for having but thought them my heart within,
A treble penance must be done.

14. 'When Michael lay on his dying bed,
His conscience was awakened:
He bethought him of his sinful deed,
And he gave me a sign to come with speed:
I was in Spain when the morning rose,
But I stood by his bed ere evening close.
The words may not again be said,
That he spoke to me on death-bed laid;
They would rend this Abbaye's massy nave,
And pile it in heaps above his grave.

15. 'I swore to bury his Mighty Book,
That never mortal might therein look;
And never to tell where it was hid,
Save at his chief of Branksome's need:
And when that need was past and o'er,
Again the volume to restore.
I buried him on St. Michael's night,
When the bell tolled one, and the moon was bright;

And I dug his chamber among the dead,
When the floor of the chancel was stained red,
That his patron's cross might over him wave,
And scare the fiends from the Wizard's grave.

16. 'It was a night of woe and dread,
When Michael in the tomb I laid!
Strange sounds along the chancel passed,
The banners waved without a blast'—
Still spoke the monk, when the bell tolled one!—
I tell you, that a braver man
Than William of Deloraine, good at need,
Against a foe ne'er spurred a steed;
Yet somewhat was he chilled with dread,
And his hair did bristle upon his head.

17. 'Lo, Warrior! now, the Cross of Red
Points to the grave of the mighty dead;
Within it burns a wondrous light,
To chase the spirits that love the night:
That lamp shall burn unquenchably,
Until the eternal doom shall be.'—
Slow moved the monk to the broad flag-stone,
Which the bloody Cross was traced upon:
He pointed to a secret nook;
An iron bar the Warrior took;
And the Monk made a sign with his withered hand,
The grave's huge portal to expand.

18. With beating heart to the task he went;
His sinewy frame o'er the gravestone bent;

With bar of iron heaved amain,
Till the toil-drops fell from his brows, like rain.
It was by dint of passing strength,
That he moved the massy stone at length.
I would you had been there, to see
How the light broke forth so gloriously,
Streamed upward to the chancel roof,
And through the galleries far aloof!
No earthly flame blazed e'er so bright:
It shone like Heaven's own blessed light,
And, issuing from the tomb,
Showed the Monk's cowl, and visage pale,
Danced on the dark-brow'd Warrior's mail,
And kissed his waving plume.

19. Before their eyes the Wizard lay,
As if he had not been dead a day.
His hoary beard in silver rolled,
He seemed some seventy winters old;
A palmer's amice wrapped him round,
With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,
Like a pilgrim from beyond the sea:
His left hand held his Book of Might;
A silver cross was in his right;
The lamp was placed beside his knee:
High and majestic was his look,
At which the fellest fiends had shook,
And all unruffled was his face:
They trusted his soul had gotten grace.

20. Often had William of Deloraine
Rode through the battle's bloody plain,

And trampled down the warriors slain,
And neither known remorse nor awe ;
Yet now remorse and awe he owned ;
His breath came thick, his head swam round,
When this strange scene of death he saw.
Bewildered and unnerved he stood,
And the priest prayed fervently and loud :
With eyes averted prayed he ;
He might not endure the sight to see,
Of the man he had loved so brotherly.

21. And when the priest his death-prayer had prayed,
Thus unto Deloraine he said :—
'Now, speed thee what thou hast to do,
Or, Warrior, we may dearly rue ;
For those, thou may'st not look upon,
Are gathering fast round the yawning stone!'
Then Deloraine, in terror, took
From the cold hand the Mighty Book,
With iron clasped, and with iron bound :
He thought, as he took it, the dead man frowned ;
But the glare of the sepulchral light,
Perchance had dazzled the Warrior's sight.

NOTE

1. **Neck-verse at Hairibee.** If a moss-trooper, when brought out to execution at Hairibee, near Carlisle, claimed 'benefit of his clergy' he was required to prove his claim by reading Psalm 51, verse 1, from the Latin Psalter. On successfully accomplishing this task his life was spared, but he was banished from the kingdom.

COLERIDGE

PART I.—HIS LIFE

Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born at Ottery St. Mary, in Devonshire, 21st October 1772. He was educated at Christ's Hospital and Jesus College, Cambridge. After leaving Cambridge he became intimate with Southey, and in 1795 married Sara Fricker, a sister of Southey's wife. While living at Nether-Stowey, he met William and Dorothy Wordsworth, his neighbours at Alfoxden. With them he visited Germany, and afterwards settled near them in the Lake district. He subsequently held a secretaryship in Malta. In 1810 domestic difficulties, increased by his habit of taking opium, caused him to leave his family and come up to London, where he wrote and lectured. In 1816 he found a home in the house of Mr. Gillman, a physician, where he died 25th July 1834. His principal works are: 'The Ancient Mariner,' and other contributions to *Lyrical Ballads; Remorse: a Tragedy; Christabel; Biographia Literaria; Literary Remains* (edited by H. N. Coleridge).

Coleridge's **childhood** was passed in the heart of the woodland scenery of Devon. But the influence of his father, a dreamer and a student, seems to have had more effect upon him than that of external nature. Even at that early period his precocious genius was directed towards metaphysical speculation. During his school life, shut inside the walls of Christ's Hospital, he had no opportunity

of making himself familiar with the aspects of the outside world, such as was given to his great contemporary Wordsworth. This increased his early devotion to metaphysics, and his passion for natural beauty was aroused, as it were, accidentally by the study of the *Sonnets* of Bowles. At school he was the friend of Charles Lamb, who says of him in 'Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago' (*Essays of Elia*): 'Samuel Taylor Coleridge — Logician, Metaphysician, Bard!—How have I seen the casual passer through the Cloisters stand still entranced with admiration (while he weighed the disproportion between the *speech* and the *garb* of the young Mirandula), to hear thee unfold, in thy deep and sweet intonations, the mysteries of Jamblichus, or Plotinus (for even in those years thou waxedst not pale at such philosophic draughts), or reciting Homer in his Greek or Pindar—while the walls of the old Grey Friars re-echoed to the accents of the *inspired charity-boy!*'

The years spent at **Cambridge** form his period of preparation for the poetical outburst which was to follow. His mind was divided between metaphysics and poetry, and his principal poem of this period, *Religious Musings*, contains both these elements in a remarkable degree. He was, as might be expected, an ardent republican, but his republicanism, like that of Wordsworth, disappeared in his later years. His recantation is to be found in those superb odes, *To the Departing Day* and *France*.

The first joys of **marriage** made him forget for a time his 'vain philosophy,' and we are now to notice the main phenomenon of Coleridge's poetic life—'not as with most poets, the gradual development of a poetic gift, determined, enriched, retarded, by the circumstances of the poet's life, but the sudden blossoming, through one short season, of a gift already perfect in its kind, which thereafter deteriorates as suddenly with something like premature old age.' During Coleridge's residence at Nether-Stowey, he composed or sketched out nearly all those poems by which he is best known. When that effort had run its course,

he relapsed into comparative silence. The influence of Wordsworth was during this time supreme with him. Wordsworth encouraged in him that love of nature and that faith in her powers which was part of the poetical creed of the Lake School. To this Coleridge added his own inimitable grace and power of dealing with the supernatural.

Coleridge's poetic career really closes with his departure from Nether-Stowey. His habits of life were averse to any sustained poetical effort; and when he left the Lakes he was cut off from all further intercourse with Wordsworth.

The fact that Coleridge has left hardly anything *completed* testifies to that weakness of will which was his besetting sin. His opium drams, and the readiness with which he accepted pecuniary obligations, denote a man of little independence of character. His personality was most charming, and his conversational powers were very great. There are few men who have thought or read more. It is only the limited quantity of his poetical work which prevents him from taking rank among the greatest of English poets.

PART II.—GENERAL CRITICISM

I.—Aim in the Poem

It would be difficult to assign any definite aim beyond the story-telling to an incomplete fragment like *Christabel*. Possibly no definite aim existed in Coleridge's mind. He did not take the same lofty view of the poet's duty as Wordsworth did, who laid great stress on the 'worthy purpose' of his poetry. It was sufficient for Coleridge that what he wrote should serve to soothe or delight *him* — the writer. No doubt he meant in *Christabel* to realise his conception of what a romantic ballad, depending on supernatural machinery, should be; and such a

plan must have been pleasing to him, both as a psychologist and as a painter of external nature.

II.—Was the Aim successful?

There is something in Coleridge's supernaturalism unlike anything else in English literature. The delicate touches by which a ghostly significance is given to apparently commonplace details belong peculiarly to him. Nothing gruesome or horrifying is forced upon the reader—

> Yet over all there hung a cloud of fear,
> A sense of mystery the spirit daunted.

A baron's daughter meets a damsel lost in the forest, and affords her hospitality. The incident is ordinary enough; the treatment fills us with emotions of suspense and terror. Contrast the prevailing methods of *Tales of Wonder*, and notice the different effects of the passage in our selection—

> Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine! etc.—

and of those absurd lines in *Alonzo the Brave and the Fair Imogine*—

> The Lady is silent; the stranger complies—
> His visor he slowly unclosed.
> O God! What a sight met fair Imogine's eyes!
> What words can express her *dismay* and *surprise*
> When a skeleton's head was exposed!
>
> All present then uttered a terrified shout,
> All turned with disgust from the scene,
> The worms they crawled in, and the worms they crawled out,
> And sported his eyes and his temples about,
> While the spectre addressed Imogine.

It is in his self-restraint, when dealing with the supernatural, and his avoidance of what Macaulay characterises as the 'fee-faw-fum of Tasso and Klopstock,' that Coleridge earns his highest fame as an artist.

III.—Was the Aim in Accordance with the Fundamental Principles of his Art?

In giving *Christabel* to the world, Coleridge joined that most valuable movement, the revival of the old ballad poetry. As pointed out in the Introduction, this movement originated with Bishop Percy, and proved of the greatest service in turning public opinion against the 'correct' poets. Coleridge's chief merit in *Christabel*, however, is found in his introduction into the old ballad form of modern reflection and moral sentiment. In this he differs not only from his predecessors, the old ballad writers, but also from his immediate successor, Scott.

PART III.—TECHNICAL CRITICISM

I.—Elements of Style

1. *Vocabulary.* — The vocabulary of *Christabel* is both copious and choice. It is in the main made up of words of Saxon origin, and archaic words and constructions are introduced to suit the old ballad form.[1] The chief peculiarity lies in the abundance of epithet. Coleridge was aware of his excess in this respect, and endeavoured to rectify it; but we have still many examples of it.[2] It is an essential peculiarity of the old ballad-mongers.

2. *Sentence, Paragraph, and Metre.*—Unlike his more philosophical poems, Coleridge's narrative is plain and straightforward, with few elaborate constructions. The metre is, as the author says in his Preface, not, properly

[1] Stanza 4, makes; stanza 12, wis; stanza 25, wildered; stanza 26, countrée.

[2] Last line of stanza 6, and many others.

speaking, irregular. Though the number of syllables in each line may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the *accents* will be found to be only four. Nevertheless, this occasional variation in number of syllables is not introduced wantonly, or for the mere ends of convenience, but in correspondence with some transition, in the nature of the imagery or passion.

3. *Adornment.* — There are strikingly few figures of speech in *Christabel.* Metaphor and simile are practically absent. An example of onomatopœia is found in stanza 7. But in the main the adornment lies in the epithets, the profusion of which has been already noticed.

II.—Intellectual Qualities of Style

1. *Clearness and Simplicity.*—The charges of obscurity brought against Coleridge's poetry in general cannot be sustained against *Christabel.* In the whole of our selection there is, we think, only one couplet (stanza 30, ll. 3, 4) which the average reader may not understand. As regards *simplicity*, we have minuteness, but no diffuseness, and the entire absence of *allusions* makes each individual sentence easy of comprehension. As the poem is unfinished, we cannot criticise the structure as a whole; but what we have of it gives the impression of a carefully worked out and complete design.

III.—Emotional Qualities of Style

1. *Strength.*—Coleridge's chief quality of strength is *grace.* He is the one poet of the early part of the nineteenth century who shows throughout his work consistent artistic care, such as we have become accustomed to from poets of the present day. He never allows the marks of his file to be seen, however, and his style is the perfection of graceful ease. His odes are characterised by force and splendour. When he approaches the super-

natural, what strikes us is the marvellous lightness and delicacy of his touch.

2. *Pathos.*—As before remarked, where the prevailing note of a poem is horror and tragedy, pathos cannot be admitted. That Coleridge can be pathetic, *The Ancient Mariner* conclusively shows.

ESSAY-SUBJECTS:—(1) 'Ballad Poetry'; (2) 'The various ways in which R. L. Stevenson, H. Rider Haggard, Rudyard Kipling, and Conan Doyle treat the sensational.'

CHRISTABEL

Canto I

1. 'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,
And the owls have wakened the crowing cock ;
Tu—whit ! Tu—whoo !
And hark again ! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew.

2. Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,
Hath a toothless mastiff bitch ;
From her kennel beneath the rock
She maketh answer to the clock,
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour ;
Ever and aye, by shine and shower,
Sixteen short howls, not over loud ;
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

3. Is the night chilly and dark ?
The night is chilly, but not dark.
The thin gray cloud is spread on high,
It covers but not hides the sky.
The moon is behind, and at the full ;
And yet she looks both small and dull.

The night is chill, the cloud is gray :
'Tis a month before the month of May,
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.

4. The lovely lady, Christabel,
Whom her father loves so well,
What makes her in the wood so late,
A furlong from the castle gate ?
She had dreams all yesternight
Of her own betrothed knight ;
And she in the midnight wood will pray
For the weal of her lover that's far away.

5. She stole along, she nothing spoke,
The sighs she heaved were soft and low,
And naught was green upon the oak
But moss and rarest mistletoe :
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,
And in silence prayeth she.

6. The lady sprang up suddenly,
The lovely lady, Christabel !
It moaned as near, as near can be,
But what it is, she cannot tell.—
On the other side it seems to be,
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

7. The night is chill ; the forest bare ;
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak ?
There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek—

There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

8. Hush, beating heart of Christabel!
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!
She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak.
What sees she there?

9. There she sees a damsel bright,
Drest in a silken robe of white,
That shadowy in the moonlight shone:
The neck that made that white robe wan,
Her stately neck, and arms were bare;
Her blue-veined feet unsandal'd were,
And wildly glittered here and there
The gems entangled in her hair.
I guess 'twas frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she—
Beautiful exceedingly!

10. Mary mother, save me now!
(Said Christabel), And who art thou?

11. The lady strange made answer meet,
And her voice was faint and sweet:—
Have pity on my sore distress,
I scarce can speak for weariness:

Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear!
Said Christabel, How camest thou here?
And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet,
Did thus pursue her answer meet:—

12. My sire is of a noble line,
And my name is Geraldine:
Five warriors seized me yestermorn,
Me, even me, a maid forlorn:
They choked my cries with force and fright,
And tied me on a palfrey white.
The palfrey was as fleet as wind,
And they rode furiously behind.
They spurred amain, their steeds were white:
And once we crossed the shade of night.
As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,
I have no thought what men they be;
Nor do I know how long it is
(For I have lain entranced I wis)
Since one, the tallest of the five,
Took me from the palfrey's back,
A weary woman, scarce alive.
Some muttered words his comrades spoke:
He placed me underneath this oak;
He swore they would return with haste;
Whither they went I cannot tell—
I thought I heard, some minutes past,
Sounds as of a castle bell.
Stretch forth thy hand (thus ended she),
And help a wretched maid to flee.

13. Then Christabel stretched forth her hand,
And comforted fair Geraldine:

O well, bright dame! may you command
The service of Sir Leoline;
And gladly our stout chivalry
Will he send forth, and friends withal
To guide and guard you safe and free
Home to your noble father's hall.

14. She rose: and forth with steps they passed
That strove to be, and were not, fast.
Her gracious stars the lady blest,
And thus spake on sweet Christabel:
All our household are at rest,
The hall is silent as the cell;
Sir Leoline is weak in health,
And may not well awakened be,
But we will move as if in stealth,
And I beseech your courtesy,
This night, to share your couch with me.

15. They crossed the moat, and Christabel
Took the key that fitted well;
A little door she opened straight,
All in the middle of the gate;
The gate that was ironed within and without,
Where an army in battle array had marched out.
The lady sank, belike through pain,
And Christabel with might and main
Lifted her up, a weary weight,
Over the threshold of the gate:
Then the lady rose again,
And moved, as she were not in pain.

16. So free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court: right glad they were.
And Christabel devoutly cried
To the lady by her side,
Praise we the Virgin, all divine,
Who hath rescued thee from thy distress!
Alas, alas! said Geraldine,
I cannot speak for weariness.
So free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court: right glad they were.

17. Outside her kennel the mastiff old
Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.
The mastiff old did not awake,
Yet she an angry moan did make!
And what can ail the mastiff bitch?
Never till now she uttered yell
Beneath the eye of Christabel.
Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch:
For what can ail the mastiff bitch?

18. They passed the hall, that echoes still,
Pass as lightly as you will!
The brands were flat, the brands were dying,
Amid their own white ashes lying;
But when the lady passed, there came
A tongue of light, a fit of flame;
And Christabel saw the lady's eye,
And nothing else saw she thereby,
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,
Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall.
O softly tread, said Christabel,
My father seldom sleepeth well.

19. Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare,
And, jealous of the listening air,
They steal their way from stair to stair,
Now in glimmer, and now in gloom,
And now they pass the Baron's room,
As still as death, with stifled breath!
And now have reached her chamber door;
And now doth Geraldine press down
The rushes of the chamber floor.

20. The moon shines dim in the open air,
And not a moonbeam enters here.
But they without its light can see
The chamber carved so curiously,
Carved with figures strange and sweet,
All made out of the carver's brain,
For a lady's chamber meet:
The lamp with twofold silver chain
Is fastened to an angel's feet.

21. The silver lamp burns dead and dim;
But Christabel the lamp will trim.
She trimmed the lamp, and made it bright,
And left it swinging to and fro,
While Geraldine, in wretched plight,
Sank down upon the floor below.

22. O weary lady, Geraldine,
I pray you, drink this cordial wine!
It is a wine of virtuous powers;
My mother made it of wild flowers.

23. And will your mother pity me,
Who am a maiden most forlorn?
Christabel answered—Woe is me!
She died the hour that I was born.
I have heard the grey-haired friar tell,
How on her death-bed she did say,
That she should hear the castle-bell
Strike twelve upon my wedding-day.
O mother dear! that thou wert here!
I would, said Geraldine, she were!

24. But soon with altered voice, said she—
'Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine!
I have power to bid thee flee.'
Alas! what ails poor Geraldine?
Why stares she with unsettled eye?
Can she the bodiless dead espy?
And why with hollow voice cries she,
'Off, woman, off! this hour is mine—
Though thou her guardian spirit be,
Off, woman, off! 'tis given to me.'

25. Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side,
And raised to heaven her eyes so blue—
Alas! said she, this ghastly ride—
Dear lady! it hath wildered you!
The lady wiped her moist cold brow
And faintly said, ''Tis over now!'

26. Again the wild-flower wine she drank:
Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,
And from the floor whereon she sank
The lofty lady stood upright:

She was most beautiful to see,
Like a lady of a far countrée.

27. And thus the lofty lady spake—
'All they who live in the upper sky,
Do love you, holy Christabel!
And you love them, and for their sake
And for the good which me befel
Even I in my degree will try,
Fair maiden, to requite you well.
But now unrobe yourself; for I
Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie.'

28. Quoth Christabel, So let it be!
And as the lady bade, did she.
Her gentle limbs did she undress,
And lay down in her loveliness.

29. But through her brain of weal and woe
So many thoughts moved to and fro,
That vain it were her lids to close;
So half-way from the bed she rose,
And on her elbow did recline
To look at the lady Geraldine.

30. Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs;
Ah! what a stricken look was hers!
Deep from within she seems half-way
To lift some weight with sick assay,
And eyes the maid and seeks delay;
Then suddenly, as one defied,

Collects herself in scorn and pride,
And lay down by the Maiden's side!—
And in her arms the maid she took,
Ah well-a-day!
And with low voice and doleful look
These words did say:
'In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,
Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!
Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow,
This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow;
But vainly thou warrest,
For this is alone in
Thy power to declare,
That in the dim forest
Thou heard'st a low moaning,
And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair;
And did'st bring her home with thee in love and in charity,
To shield her and shelter her from the damp air.'

BYRON

PART I.—HIS LIFE

George Gordon Noel Byron was born on 22nd January 1788. His childhood was spent at Aberdeen and Dulwich, and at the age of thirteen he was sent to Harrow. His holidays were passed with his mother at Nottingham. In 1805 he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, and two years later he published a volume of poems entitled *Hours of Idleness*. The book was severely handled in the *Edinburgh Review*, and Byron replied by a cutting satire, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. In January 1815 he left England, and travelled in Europe, principally in Greece and Turkey. On returning home in 1812, he brought out the first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, which gained him immediate poetic fame and social popularity. In 1813 he published *The Giaour* and *The Bride of Abydos;* in 1814 *The Corsair* and *Lara*. The same year he married Miss Milbanke; but, for some unknown cause, she left his house early in 1816, and refused to live with him. The public, knowing nothing of the matter, espoused Lady Byron's cause so warmly that Byron was forced to leave England, never to return. The rest of his life was passed on the Continent, at Geneva, Venice, Rome, Ravenna, Pisa, and in Greece. During this time he finished *Childe Harold*, and also wrote *The Prisoner of Chillon*, *Beppo*, *Manfred*, *Mazeppa*, *Marino Faliero*, *Sardanapalus*, *The Two Foscari*, *Cain*, *The Vision of Judgment*, and *Don Juan*.

In 1823 he joined the Greek insurgents at Missolonghi, to aid them in their struggle against the Turks, but in a few months he was struck down by fever, and died on 19th April 1824 at the age of thirty-six.

Byron was most unfortunate in his birth and **parentage**. His father was a *roué*, who deserted his wife shortly after the poet was born; and his mother was singularly unfitted for the management of a sensitive child. She alternately petted and abused him, and by her treatment gave every encouragement to that disposition to revolt against authority which distinguishes her son's intellectual life.

In his early days at Aberdeen and in the Scottish Highlands, he formed that passion for mountain scenery which his poetry often declares. At **Harrow** he learnt but little except a love for outdoor sports and the poetry of Pope.

The discipline of Harrow had not time to eradicate the effects of his mother's foolish teaching, and at **Cambridge** he was distinguished for his contempt for college rules and his inclination to scepticism. *Hours of Idleness*, published at this time, shows but few signs of genius. But throughout his life a great wrong was always an incentive to literary exertion. The first he had to suffer was at the hands of Jeffrey, who attacked the maiden effort of his pen with undue harshness. Byron took an ample revenge in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. The style of this satire—an imitation of *The Dunciad*—is most unlike anything he wrote in later years.

It was during his years of **travel** that he started upon his poetical career. His imagination was fired by the life of the East, and, while wandering there, he collected that vast store of description and character which appears in his later poetry. The regions he travelled through were then comparatively unknown in England, and the novelty, as well as the beauty of his descriptions, added much to the popularity of his poetry.

The great crisis of his life was his wife's desertion, and

the ostracism to which he was in consequence subjected. In his previous poems much of the melancholy, misanthropy, and impiety had been assumed. Henceforth there was only too much reality in his cynicism.

At **Geneva** he became intimate with Shelley. In the third canto of *Childe Harold*, Shelley's influence may be seen in the increased power of the descriptive verse, and the larger appreciation of the beauties of external nature. *Manfred*, written about this time, is tinged with memories of Alpine solitudes and scenery.

He now settled at **Venice**, and visited Rome. This was followed by the production of the magnificent fourth canto of *Childe Harold*. But it would seem as though life in cities had turned his mind for a time away from dreary egotism and reflection upon the past; and *Beppo*, a light and witty narrative with hardly any plot, foreshadows the style which he afterwards adopted in *The Vision of Judgment* and *Don Juan*.

Life at **Ravenna**, and sympathy with the Italian revolutionary party, seem to have turned his mind towards political drama, for at this time he wrote *Marino Faliero*, *The Two Foscari*, and *Sardanapalus*. But *Don Juan*, commenced in 1818, and laid aside for a while, attracted most of his poetical energy during the remainder of his life.

Byron's career as a poet, then, began with his first great sorrow—his wife's desertion. Under the influence of Shelley his hitherto wild and untrammelled genius became steadied and matured. His truly characteristic work was done when he had recovered from the first pains of exile, while still retaining the feelings of bitterness and scorn which it had aroused.

PART II.—GENERAL CRITICISM

I.—The Poet's Aim

In *Beppo* Byron discovered that he possessed a hitherto unsuspected power over comedy in poetry. He determined to try his strength in a longer poem on the same lines. His object was to satirise the manners and society of the various countries of Europe with which he was familiar, and incidentally to break a lance against priests, Tories, Lake poets, and English hypocrisy generally. The narrative style, however, required more than mere satire to sustain it, and *Don Juan* contains many of Byron's most beautiful passages of description and reflection. Satire, however, is the main object. The story as a story is unimportant, and is allowed to dawdle along much as the poet feels inclined, interrupted by innumerable digressions.

II.—Was the Aim successful?

The prevailing note of the satire in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* is bad temper; that of *The Vision of Judgment* is extravagant spite against individuals. The satire of *Don Juan* is less narrow and less intense, and its effect in consequence is far more damaging and blighting. The blows are planted more scientifically, and there is not so much beating the air. The effect of the sarcasm is greatly heightened by the blending of grave and gay in the same episode.

III.—Was this Aim in Accordance with Fundamental Principles of Art?

It may be taken for granted that Byron's satire was written to satisfy and express his own feelings rather than to work any permanent good to the world. He makes

mock of much that deserves mockery; but he also, by inference at least, exalts what is vicious. If the function of satire be to cause amusement, and to rouse feelings of admiration for the author, Byron's satire has succeeded; but Johnson's definition of satire—'A *moral* poem (as such, opposed to lampoon), wherein vice or folly is either ridiculed or censured with irony'—applies in part only, and that the smaller part, to *Don Juan*.

PART III.—TECHNICAL CRITICISM

I.—Elements of Style

1. *Vocabulary.* — Byron's vocabulary contains words of every sort and description, from slang to the loftiest poetic diction. The varied style of his poem demands this. His Eastern descriptions require the constant use of Eastern expressions. Elsewhere he is fond of introducing foreign words to such an extent that some of his verses read like macaronics.[1] The proportion of Saxon words is somewhat less than in ordinary conversational English, but when Byron is most moving and serious he is also most Saxon. His rimes occasionally compel him to take liberties with his vocabulary, but these rimes are only attempted in humorous passages.[2]

2. *Sentence, Paragraph, and Metre.*—Byron's sentences are long and involved, full of parentheses and of phrases or clauses used in apposition to the main idea. This is what we should expect in a poem which is merely a 'continuous poetic journal,' where the poet jots down his thoughts as they arise. The stanza is so little a verse paragraph that the full stop does not always end it.

[1] Line 216, Ποιητικῆς, and the following line elsewhere—

O thou teterrima causa of all belli,

[2] Line 118.

Whenever a satirical or descriptive *point* is to be made, however, it is placed in the last two lines of the stanza. The lines overlap freely. The metre is the Italian eight-lined stanza, and in the management of it Byron shows considerable skill, especially in riming. It is true that his rimes are often careless or incorrect, but much more often they are excessively happy and ingenious. It may be noticed that in serious passages the rime is monosyllabic; in satirical or humorous passages, disyllabic or trisyllabic.

3. *Adornment.*—Byron's workmanship was too careless to admit of much elaborate figurative adornment. He seems to feel a curious aversion to being too demonstratively poetical. He sometimes finishes off a purple patch of ornament with deliberate bathos, as though to assure the reader that he need not be taken in earnest. Epigram he delights in, and we have no greater master of it. In addition to the few examples in our selection, we may refer the student to the brilliant succession which occurs in the opening of Canto ix. His similes and metaphors are splendidly expressive. The following stanza, not in our selection, well illustrates his abundant imagination in figures of comparison, and also his assumed contempt for them :—

> And she bent o'er him, and he lay beneath
> Hush'd as a babe upon its mother's breast,
> Droop'd as the willow when no winds can breathe,
> Lull'd like the depth of ocean when at rest,
> Fair as the crowning rose of the whole wreath,
> Soft as the callow cygnet in its nest;
> In short, he was a very pretty fellow,
> Although his woes had turned him rather yellow.

II.—Intellectual Qualities of Style

1. *Clearness.*—To quote the poet himself from a passage early in the next canto—

> I don't pretend that I quite understand
> My own meaning when I would be very fine.

But this self-depreciation is hardly just. There is little of his verse, at least in *Don Juan*, that cannot be perfectly understood at the first reading. Even in the rambling passages, in which he often indulges, there is always a careless energy which puts his idea clearly enough before the reader.

2. *Simplicity.*—No one, on the other hand, is less simple. He constantly digresses from the main subject. He uses, as before noted, words and phrases taken from many foreign languages; but his want of simplicity is chiefly owing to the allusions to history, politics, science, or literature which he constantly makes, and which are intelligible only to the initiated. It is not every one who can immediately comprehend the full force of references to the Scian and the Teian Muse, or the Pyrrhic dance and Pyrrhic phalanx, or the spectre huntsman of Onesti's line.

III.—Emotional Qualities of Style

1. *Strength.*—Byron's versatility embraces more than one special quality of strength. Even our selection is characterised by at least two different forms of strength. The lyric is *fervid*, and the descriptions of evening scenes are *graceful*. Vivacity is the main characteristic of his satire. He tells us that he has no plan in *Don Juan*—

> Unless it were to be a moment merry,
> A novel word in my vocabulary.

But, again, we must doubt his assertion. The merriment in the poem may be bitter, but nothing could be more spontaneous or natural.

2. *The Ludicrous.*—To those who had been long accustomed to look upon Byron as the poet to whom despair, suicide, and revenge were congenial themes, *Beppo* and *Don Juan* must have been a revelation. His early satire displayed wit and humour of the bludgeon type. In *Don Juan* he employs a sharp, rapier-like thrust, far more

effective for destroying his adversary. He possesses the rare power—also possessed by Sydney Smith—of making one word light up a whole sentence with humour. He laid his rime under contribution, and his like endings are often as ingenious and amusing as those of Hood or Barham.

IV.—Kind of Poem

Don Juan is, as Byron calls it, 'an exotic.' It was modelled on the style of Pulci, the author of *Morgante Maggiore*, and of 'the ingenious Whistlecraft,' otherwise John Hookham Frere, the author of *The Monks and the Giants*. Their half-jocular way of treating stories of chivalry and adventure was adopted by Byron as a relief to the painful seriousness of most of the romantic narrative poets.

Essay-Subjects:—(1) 'We know no spectacle so ridiculous as the British Public in one of its periodical fits of morality'; (2) 'How far in Europe has national character been affected by climate and geographical position?'

DON JUAN

Latter Part of Canto III

1. The isles of Greece! the isles of Greece!
   Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
   Where grew the arts of war and peace,
   Where Delos rose, and Phœbus sprung!
   Eternal summer gilds them yet,
   But all, except their sun, is set.

2. The Scian and the Teian muse,[1]
   The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
   Have found the fame your shores refuse;
   Their place of birth alone is mute
   To sounds which echo further west
   Than your sires' 'Islands of the Blest.'

3. The mountains look on Marathon—
   And Marathon looks on the sea;
   And musing there an hour alone,
   I dream'd that Greece might still be free;
   For standing on the Persians' grave,
   I could not deem myself a slave.

[1] *i.e.* Homer and Anacreon.

4. A king sate on the rocky brow
Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis ;
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
And men in nations ;—all were his !
He counted them at break of day—
And when the sun set where were they ?

5. And where are they ? and where art thou,
My country ? On thy voiceless shore
The heroic lay is tuneless now—
The heroic bosom beats no more !
And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine ?

6. 'Tis something, in the dearth of fame,
Though link'd among a fetter'd race,
To feel at least a patriot's shame,
Even as I sing, suffuse my face ;
For what is left the poet here ?
For Greeks a blush—for Greece a tear.

7. Must *we* but weep o'er days more blest ?
Must *we* but blush ?—Our fathers bled.
Earth ! render back from out thy breast
A remnant of our Spartan dead !
Of the three hundred grant but three,
To make a new Thermopylæ !

8. What, silent still ? and silent all ?
Ah ! no ;—the voices of the dead
Sound like a distant torrent's fall,
And answer, ' Let one living head,
But one, arise,—we come, we come ! '
'Tis but the living who are dumb.

9. In vain—in vain: strike other chords;
Fill high the cup with Samian wine!
Leave battles to the Turkish hordes,
And shed the blood of Scio's vine!
Hark! rising to the ignoble call—
How answers each bold Bacchanal!

10. You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet;
Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?
Of two such lessons, why forget
The nobler and the manlier one?
You have the letters Cadmus gave—
Think you he meant them for a slave?

11. Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
We will not think of themes like these!
It made Anacreon's song divine:
He served—but served Polycrates—
A tyrant; but our masters then
Were still, at least, our countrymen.

12. The tyrant of the Chersonese
Was freedom's best and bravest friend;
That tyrant was Miltiades!
Oh! that the present hour would lend
Another despot of the kind!
Such chains as his were sure to bind.

13. Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
On Suli's rock and Parga's shore,
Exists the remnant of a line
Such as the Doric mothers bore;
And there, perhaps some seed is sown,
The Heracleidan blood might own.

14. Trust not for freedom to the Franks—
They have a king who buys and sells:
In native swords, and native ranks,
The only hope of courage dwells;
But Turkish force, and Latin fraud,
Would break your shield, however broad.

15. Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
Our virgins dance beneath the shade—
I see their glorious black eyes shine;
But, gazing on each glowing maid,
My own the burning tear-drop laves,
To think such breasts must suckle slaves.

16. Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,
Where nothing, save the waves and I,
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep:
There, swan-like, let me sing and die.
A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine—
Dash down yon cup of Samian wine!

17. Thus sung, or would, or could, or should have sung,
The modern Greek, in tolerable verse;
If not like Orpheus quite, when Greece was young,
Yet in these times he might have done much worse:
His strain display'd some feeling—right or wrong;
And feeling, in a poet, is the source
Of others' feelings: but they are such liars,
And take all colours—like the hands of dyers.

. . . . .

18. We learn from Horace 'Homer sometimes sleeps';
We feel without him, Wordsworth sometimes wakes,—
To show with what complacency he creeps,
With his dear '*Waggoners*' around his lakes.
He wishes for a 'boat' to sail the deeps—
Of ocean?—No, of air; and then he makes
Another outcry for 'a little boat,'
And drivels seas to set it well afloat.

19. If he must fain sweep o'er the ethereal plain,
And Pegasus runs restive in his 'Waggon,'
Could he not beg the loan of Charles's wain,
Or pray Medea for a single dragon?
Or if too classic for his vulgar brain,
He fear'd his neck to venture such a nag on,
And he must needs mount nearer to the moon,
Could not the blockhead ask for a balloon?

20. 'Pedlars' and 'Boats' and 'Waggons'! O ye shades
Of Pope and Dryden, are we to come to this?
That trash of such sort not alone evades
Contempt, but from the bathos' vast abyss
Floats scum-like uppermost; and those Jack Cades
Of sense and song, above your graves may hiss—
The 'little boatman' and his 'Peter Bell'
Can sneer at him who drew 'Achitophel'!

21. T'our tale.—The feast was over, the slaves gone,
The dwarfs and dancing girls had all retired;
The Arab lore and poet's song were done,
And every sound of revelry expired;

The lady and her lover, left alone,
The rosy flood of twilight's sky admired ;—
Ave Maria ! o'er the earth and sea,
That heavenliest hour of Heaven is worthiest thee !

22. Ave Maria ! blessed be the hour,
The time, the clime, the spot, where I so oft
Have felt that moment in its fullest power
Sink o'er the earth so beautiful and soft,
While swung the deep bell in the distant tower,
Or the faint dying day-hymn stole aloft,
And not a breath crept through the rosy air,
And yet the forest leaves seem'd stirr'd with prayer.

23. Ave Maria ! 'tis the hour of prayer !
Ave Maria ! 'tis the hour of love !
Ave Maria ! may our spirits dare
Look up to thine and to thy Son's above !
Ave Maria ! oh that face so fair !
Those downcast eyes beneath the Almighty dove—
What though 'tis but a pictured image ?—strike—
That painting is no idol—'tis too like.

24. Some kinder casuists are pleased to say,
In nameless print—that I have no devotion ;
But set those persons down with me to pray,
And you shall see who has the properest notion
Of getting into heaven the shortest way :
My altars are the mountains and the ocean,
Earth, air, stars,—all that springs from the great Whole,
Who hath produced, and will receive the soul.

25. Sweet hour of twilight!—in the solitude
Of the pine forest, and the silent shore
Which bounds Ravenna's immemorial wood,
Rooted where once the Adrian wave flow'd o'er,
To where the last Cæsarean fortress stood,
Evergreen forest! which Boccacio's lore
And Dryden's lay made haunted ground to me,
How have I loved the twilight hour and thee!

26. The shrill cicalas, people of the pine,
Making their summer lives one ceaseless song,
Were the sole echoes, save my steed's and mine,
And vesper bells that rose the boughs along:
The spectre huntsman of Onesti's line,
His hell-dogs and their chase, and the fair throng,
Which learn'd from this example not to fly
From a true lover—shadow'd my mind's eye.

27. O Hesperus! thou bringest all good things,
Home to the weary, to the hungry cheer,
To the young bird the parents' brooding wings,
The welcome stall to the o'erlabour'd steer;
Whate'er of peace about our hearthstone clings,
Whate'er our household gods protect of dear,
Are gather'd round us by thy look of rest;
Thou bring'st the child, too, to the mother's breast.

28. Soft hour! which wakes the wish and melts the heart
Of those who sail the seas, on the first day
When they from their sweet friends are torn apart,
Or fills with love the pilgrim on his way,

As the far bell of vesper makes him start,
Seeming to weep the dying day's decay ;
Is this a fancy which our reason scorns ?
Ah ! surely nothing dies but something mourns !

29. When Nero perish'd by the justest doom,
Which ever the destroyer yet destroy'd,
Amidst the roar of liberated Rome,
Of nations freed, and the world overjoy'd,
Some hands unseen strew'd flowers upon his tomb :
Perhaps the weakness of a heart not void
Of feeling for some kindness done, when power
Had left the wretch an uncorrupted hour.

30. But I'm digressing ; what on earth has Nero,
Or any such like sovereign buffoons,
To do with the transactions of my hero,
More than such madmen's fellow-man — the moon's ?
Sure my invention must be down at zero,
And I grow one of many 'wooden spoons'
Of verse (the name with which we Cantabs please
To dub the last of honours in degrees).

31. I feel this tediousness will never do—
'Tis being *too* epic, and I must cut down
(In copying) this long Canto into two ;
They'll never find it out, unless I own
The fact, excepting some experienced few ;
And then as an improvement 'twill be shown :
I'll prove that such the opinion of the critic is,
From Aristotle *passim*.—See Ποιητικης.

SHELLEY

PART I.—HIS LIFE

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY, the eldest son of Sir Timothy Shelley, was born at Field Place, near Horsham, in Sussex, 4th August 1792. He was educated at Eton, where he was bullied, and at Oxford, whence he was expelled in 1811 for the publication of an atheistical pamphlet. In the same year he married Harriet Westbrook, the daughter of a coffee-house keeper. In consequence, he was cast off by his family, and lived for some time in poverty at different places in England and Wales. In July 1814, convinced that his wife was unfaithful to him, he deserted her, and the same month left England in company with Mary Godwin. He visited Switzerland twice, and during his second visit became acquainted with Byron. In 1816 he married Mary Godwin. In 1817 he was deprived of the custody of the children of his first marriage; and, to keep possession of the children of the second, he left England, and passed the rest of his life at Venice, Naples, Rome, and Pisa. On 8th July 1822 he was drowned in the Gulf of Spezzia.

Even when a child, Shelley was remarkable for a decided inclination towards scepticism. This natural disposition in favour of revolt was strengthened by his school life, where his sensibilities were shocked by the system of 'fagging,' which he endeavoured, single-handed, to put

down. He went up to University College, Oxford, and scorning to conceal his atheistic opinions, proclaimed them in a pamphlet on *The Necessity of Atheism.* For this he was expelled. His life up to this point had been an admirable preparation for joining the school of all-round unorthodoxy and revolt.

About this time he formed the acquaintance of William **Godwin**, the author of *Political Justice*, and Godwin's teaching is apparent in Shelley's first important poem, *Queen Mab*, a declamation against capital and priestcraft. By his marriage in 1811 he conformed to the uses of society, but in 1814 his views had become more advanced, and he had no hesitation in casting off his wife when his union with her had become irksome, and in entering upon a 'union of souls.'

The companionship of Godwin's daughter, and the Alpine scenery he visited in her company, had an inspiring effect on the composition of *Alastor*, a portrait of himself, and a record of his hopes and longings. During the winter of 1815-16 he passed much of his time in the company of Peacocke and T. J. Hogg, and from this period dates the influence which the great **Greek** writers exerted over him. Shelley's feelings of bitterness against existing institutions were accentuated by Lord Eldon's decree depriving him of his children, and his state of mind is shown in *Rosalind and Helen*, a pleading against marriage. He left England for good, and, like Byron, found fresh inspiration in the land of his exile.

The four years that follow are the great years of Shelley's life. Companionship with Byron at Venice had little direct effect upon his work, although, by allusions in his poetry and elsewhere, we gather the impression made upon him by Byron, as a man. In 1819 the 'mere atticism' of his last winter in England bore splendid fruit in *Prometheus Unbound* and *The Cenci*, Greek tragedies in the full sense of the word. Then, as though to relieve his mind, he poured forth in succession his

noblest lyrics: *The Cloud*, *The Skylark*, *The West Wind*, *The Sensitive Plant*. The intense love of nature which marks all these poems was quickened by the scenery of Pisa, where the Shelleys had settled in 1820.

Just as events of a revolutionary tendency in England in 1817 and 1819 had been followed by *The Revolt of Islam* and *The Masque of Anarchy*, so in 1821 the Greek Revolution called forth the remarkable poem *Hellas*. The death of Keats about the same time was lamented in the exquisite *Adonais*. Both this poem and *Epipsychidion* show how much more vigorous Shelley's style becomes when he is speaking of, or pleading for, another.

In Shelley a girlish and fragile form concealed great strength of will and intellect. He was a true child of the Revolution. Liberty in some form or another was constantly before his mind, all the more that he had himself, as he thought, suffered at school, at college, and at home, from the loss of it. He was one of those who had been inspired with the idea that all restraint was tyranny, and who thought that man should be allowed to shape his own destiny by the workings of his own soul. These extreme ideas, immatured by the experience which is brought by advancing years, give to Shelley's poetry much of its vagueness and dimness of outline.

PART II.—GENERAL CRITICISM

I.—Aim in Poem

The year 1820 was remarkable in the history of Europe for the attempts made by two nations to recover their liberty: Greece revolted against the dominion of the Turks; Spain endeavoured to shake off the tyrannical yoke of Ferdinand VII. This king had commenced a regular system of persecution against those who held liberal

opinions, and had brought back the monastic orders, the inquisition, and the rack. The insurrection was at first successful, and the Constitution of the Cortes of 1812 was restored. The intervention of the French Government, however, three years later, re-established the despotism. Shelley's *Ode* was written during the progress of the insurrection.

The aim of celebrating Liberty is fully accomplished in our *Ode*. Not so the subordinate object of stirring up a revolutionary spirit in England. The nation was settling down for a long and well-deserved rest, and her revolutions, important though they were, were peaceful, and gradually brought about,—not according to Shelley's suggestion in l. 211.

The rapture and energy required in an Ode are, in our selection, somewhat marred by the indistinctness which is Shelley's chief poetical fault. See Technical Criticism, II. and IV.

PART III.—TECHNICAL CRITICISM

I.—Elements of Style

1. *Vocabulary.* — The variety of the kinds of poetry successfully attempted by Shelley shows the copiousness of his vocabulary. He draws from all sources, and boldly forges words to suit his meaning. No poet is less Saxon, and his love for words of Latin and Greek origin is shown in several passages of our selection.[1] Compound words he manufactures freely.[2] He shares with Milton and Scott

[1] Stanza ii. l. 3, dædal; iii. l. 11, congregator; iv. l. 2, dividuous; vii. l. 10, capitolian; viii. l. 2, piny; xv. l. 12, sperm; xvi. l. 8, aweless.

[2] Stanza v. l. 7, thunder-zoned; vii. l. 11, spirit-winged; ix. ll. 3, 4, 8, olive-cinctured, warrior-peopled, tower-crowned; xix. l. 4, thunder-smoke.

a love for the names of places.[1] His epithets are frequent, and for the most part striking and well applied.[2]

2. *Sentence, Paragraph, and Metre.*—The *kind* of poetry (see p. 96) allows a somewhat disjointed style of sentence. Accordingly, we find in this ode long collections of clauses, apostrophes, and loose constructions. The stanza is merely a formal division of the verse. In two instances the clause is carried from one stanza into another. The metre undergoes no changes, although this is customary in compositions of the kind.

3. *Adornment.*—The poem is loaded with ornament of every sort. The epithets have been already noticed. Every stanza so bristles with figures of comparison and personification that it is needless to specify instances. We may, however, point out the exceeding beauty of the first four lines of Stanza vi. Such is Shelley's melody in versification that whole passages *seem* to be onomatopœic, but possibly the only deliberate example is in Stanza xix. lines 11, 12, and 15.

II.—Intellectual Qualities of Style

1. *Clearness.*—The want of this quality is Shelley's weakness. His muse has been compared to a Pythoness upon her tripod. His 'dreamy ecstasy, too high for speech' carries his verse along, often obscure, sometimes unintelligible. See Stanza xix.

2. *Simplicity.*—There can be no simplicity where there is much recondite allusion. Expressions such as are found in vi. 8-11; vii. 13 and 14; and viii. 14, as well as, generally speaking, the innumerable figures of comparison and metaphor, make the style extremely abstruse.

III.—Emotional Qualities of Style

1. *Strength.*—Of all the various forms of *strength* which Shelley's poetry displays, the most noticeable is *splendour.*

[1] Stanzas viii.-xiii. [2] Stanzas v. and xii.

It is not a vivid splendour, but rather 'immense, unearthly, and superhuman.' His descriptions especially, undeniably of the greatest beauty, appeal strongly to the imagination, and suggest the most gorgeous pictures. But on examination they are found, like a landscape viewed through coloured glass, to be wanting in steadfastness and truth. All this diffused splendour, while justifying the title of 'poet's poet,' which has been applied to Shelley, shows his want of self-control and his inability to subordinate what is purely ornamental to the principal object in the poem. These faults, or rather excesses, are exactly such as increased age and experience would have tended to correct. And we find in his latest works a great increase in simplicity and self-restraint.

2. *Pathos.*—Our *Ode* is too much a poem of rebellion to possess in any degree the quality of Pathos; nor is this in general characteristic of Shelley. But the reader has only to study the *Adonais*, or read the last scenes—and only the last—of *The Cenci* to appreciate what Shelley could do in this direction.

IV.—Kind of Poem

The Ode was originally a lyrical piece adapted to be sung. But in modern literature it became the medium for expressing higher and more intense emotions than can be conveyed by a mere song. Its language, therefore, should be concise and energetic, and the varying emotions of the mind should be shown by a corresponding variation of metre. In the ode, the rapt state of inspiration that gives it birth, 'leads the poet to conceive all nature as animated and conscious, and, instead of speaking about persons and objects, to address them as present.' The rapture which the ode requires, is by no means wanting in our selection, but it can hardly be called concise. The course or history of Liberty is set before us, and her aid is invoked on behalf of Spain. It is interesting to note the various

aspects in which Liberty presents herself to the nineteenth-century poets. To Scott Liberty meant the patriot's freedom; to Wordsworth and Coleridge, the freedom of the mind. In Tennyson the notion of obedience to law was so firmly implanted that he preferred the freedom, whether of mind or body, that 'broadened *slowly* down from precedent to precedent.' But to Byron and Shelley Liberty meant emancipation from all restraint of law, which they called tyranny. When Shelley praises Alfred, it is rather as the man who freed Wessex from the Danes than as the king who codified the Saxon laws. And the various appeals made to Liberty in the *Ode* are made to her rather as the Genius of the Revolution than as the Spirit who guarded the fortunes of Englishmen.

Essay-Subjects :—

(1) 'O Liberty! how many crimes are committed in thy name!'

(2) 'A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom broadens slowly down
From precedent to precedent.'

ODE TO LIBERTY

Yet, Freedom, yet thy banner torn but flying,
Streams like a thunder-storm against the wind.—BYRON.

1. A GLORIOUS people vibrated again
The lightning of the nations: Liberty,
From heart to heart, from tower to tower, o'er Spain,
Scattering contagious fire into the sky,
Gleamed. My soul spurned the chains of its dismay,
And, in the rapid plumes of song,
Clothed itself, sublime and strong;
As a young eagle soars the morning clouds among,
Hovering in verse o'er its accustomed prey;
Till from its station in the heaven of fame
The Spirit's whirlwind rapt it, and the ray
Of the remotest sphere of living flame
Which paves the void was from behind it flung,
As foam from a ship's swiftness, when there came
A voice out of the deep: I will record the same.

2. The Sun and the serenest Moon sprang forth:
The burning stars of the abyss were hurl'd
Into the depths of heaven. The dædal earth,
That island in the ocean of the world,
Hung in its cloud of all-sustaining air:

But this divinest universe
Was yet a chaos and a curse,
For thou wert not: but power from worst producing worse,
The spirit of the beasts was kindled there,
And of the birds, and of the watery forms,
And there was war among them, and despair
Within them, raging without truce or terms:
The bosom of their violated nurse
Groaned, for beasts warred on beasts, and worms on worms,
And men on men; each heart was as a hell of storms.

3. Man, the imperial shape, then multiplied
His generations under the pavilion
Of the Sun's throne: palace and pyramid,
Temple and prison, to many a swarming million,
Were, as to mountain-wolves their ragged caves.
This human living multitude
Was savage, cunning, blind, and rude,
For thou wert not; but o'er the populous solitude,
Like one fierce cloud over a waste of waves,
Hung tyranny; beneath, sate deified
The sister-pest, congregator of slaves;
Into the shadow of her pinions wide,
Anarchs and priests who feed on gold and blood,
Till with the stain their inmost souls are dyed,
Drove the astonished herds of men from every side.

4. The nodding promontories, and blue isles,
And cloud-like mountains, and dividuous waves

Of Greece, basked glorious in the open smiles
Of favouring heaven: from their enchanted caves
Prophetic echoes flung dim melody.
On the unapprehensive wild
The vine, the corn, the olive mild,
Grew, savage yet, to human use unreconciled;
And, like unfolded flowers beneath the sea,
Like the man's thought dark in the infant's brain,
Like aught that is which wraps what is to be,
Art's deathless dreams lay veiled by many a vein
Of Parian stone; and yet a speechless child,
Verse murmured, and Philosophy did strain
Her lidless eyes for thee; when o'er the Ægean main

5. Athens arose: a city such as vision
Builds from the purple crags and silver towers
Of battlemented cloud, as in derision
Of kingliest masonry: the ocean floors
Pave it; the evening sky pavilions it;
Its portals are inhabited
By thunder-zoned winds, each head
Within its cloudy wings with sun-fire garlanded,
A divine work! Athens diviner yet
Gleamed with its crest of columns, on the will
Of man, as on a mount of diamond, set;
For thou wert, and thine all-creative skill
Peopled, with forms that mock the eternal dead
In marble immortality, that hill
Which was thine earliest throne and latest oracle.

6. Within the surface of Time's fleeting river
Its wrinkled image lies, as then it lay

Immovably unquiet, and for ever
It trembles, but it cannot pass away!
The voices of thy bards and sages thunder
With an earth-awakening blast
Through the caverns of the past;
Religion veils her eyes; Oppression shrinks aghast:
A winged sound of joy, and love, and wonder,
Which soars where Expectation never flew,
Rending the veil of space and time asunder!
One ocean feeds the clouds, and streams, and dew;
One sun illumines heaven; one spirit vast
With life and love makes chaos ever new,
As Athens doth the world with thy delight renew.

7. Then Rome was, and from thy deep bosom fairest,
Like a wolf-cub from a Cadmæan Mænad,
She drew the milk of greatness, though thy dearest
From that Elysian food was yet unweaned;
And many a deed of terrible uprightness
By thy sweet love was sanctified;
And in thy smile, and by thy side,
Saintly Camillus lived, and firm Atilius died.
But when tears stained thy robe of vestal whiteness,
And gold profaned thy capitolian throne,
Thou didst desert, with spirit-winged lightness,
The senate of the tyrants: they sunk prone
Slaves of one tyrant. Palatinus sighed
Faint echoes of Ionian song; that tone
Thou didst delay to hear, lamenting to disown.

8. From what Hyrcanian glen or frozen hill,
Or piny promontory of the Arctic main,

Or utmost islet inaccessible,
Didst thou lament the ruin of thy reign,
Teaching the woods and waves, and desert rocks,
And every Naiad's ice-cold urn,
To talk in echoes sad and stern,
Of that sublimest lore which man had dared unlearn?
For neither didst thou watch the wizard flocks
Of the Scald's dreams, nor haunt the Druid's sleep.
What if the tears rained through thy shattered locks
Were quickly dried? for thou didst groan, not weep,
When from its sea of death to kill and burn,
The Galilean serpent forth did creep,
And made thy world an undistinguishable heap.

9. A thousand years the Earth cried, Where art thou?
And then the shadow of thy coming fell
On Saxon Alfred's olive-cinctured brow:
And many a warrior-peopled citadel,
Like rocks, which fire lifts out of the flat deep,
Arose in sacred Italy,
Frowning o'er the tempestuous sea
Of kings, and priests, and slaves, in tower-crowned majesty:
That multitudinous anarchy did sweep,
And burst around their walls, like idle foam,
Whilst from the human spirit's deepest deep,
Strange melody with love and awe struck dumb
Dissonant arms; and Art which cannot die,
With divine want traced on our earthly home
Fit imagery to pave heaven's everlasting dome.

10. Thou huntress swifter than the Moon! thou terror
Of the world's wolves! thou bearer of the quiver,
Whose sun-like shafts pierce tempest-winged Error,
As light may pierce the clouds when they dissever
In the calm regions of the orient day!
Luther caught thy wakening glance:
Like lightning from his leaden lance
Reflected, it dissolved the visions of the trance
In which, as in a tomb, the nations lay;
And England's prophets hailed thee as their queen,
In songs whose music cannot pass away,
Though it must flow for ever: not unseen
Before the spirit-sighted countenance
Of Milton didst thou pass, from the sad scene
Beyond whose night he saw, with a dejected mien.

11. The eager hours and unreluctant years
As on a dawn-illumined mountain stood,
Trampling to silence their loud hopes and fears,
Darkening each other with their multitude,
And cried aloud, Liberty! Indignation
Answered Pity from her cave;
Death grew pale within the grave,
And Desolation howled to the destroyer, Save!
When, like heaven's sun, girt by the exhalation
Of its own glorious light, thou didst arise,
Chasing thy foes from nation unto nation
Like shadows: as if day had cloven the skies
At dreaming midnight o'er the western wave,
Men started, staggering with a glad surprise,
Under the lightnings of thine unfamiliar eyes.

12. Thou heaven of earth! what spells could pall thee then,
In ominous eclipse? A thousand years,
Bred from the slime of deep oppression's den,
Dyed all thy liquid light with blood and tears,
Till thy sweet stars could weep the stain away;
How like Bacchanals of blood
Round France, the ghastly vintage, stood
Destruction's sceptred slaves, and Folly's mitred brood!
When one, like them, but mightier far than they,
The Anarch of thine own bewildered powers,
Rose: armies mingled in obscure array,
Like clouds with clouds, darkening the sacred bowers
Of serene heaven. He, by the past pursued,
Rests with those dead but unforgotten hours,
Whose ghosts scare victor kings in their ancestral towers.

13. England yet sleeps: was she not called of old?
Spain calls her now, as with its thrilling thunder
Vesuvius wakens Ætna, and the cold
Snow-crags by its reply are cloven in sunder:
O'er the lit waves every Æolian isle
From Pithecusa to Pelorus
Howls, and leaps, and glares in chorus:
They cry, Be dim, ye lamps of heaven suspended o'er us,
Her chains are threads of gold, she need but smile
And they dissolve; but Spain's were links of steel,
Till bit to dust by virtue's keenest file.

Twins of a single destiny! appeal
To the eternal years enthroned before us,
In the dim West; impress us from a seal,
All ye have thought and done! Time cannot dare conceal.

14. Tomb of Arminius! render up thy dead,
Till, like a standard from a watch-tower's staff,
His soul may stream over the tyrant's head!
Thy victory shall be his epitaph,
Wild Bacchanal of truth's mysterious wine,
King-deluded Germany,
His dead spirit lives in thee.
Why do we fear or hope? thou art already free!
And thou, lost Paradise of this divine
And glorious world! thou flowery wilderness!
Thou island of eternity! thou shrine
Where desolation, clothed with loveliness,
Worships the thing thou wert! O Italy,
Gather thy blood into thy heart; repress
The beasts who make their dens thy sacred palaces.

15. Oh, that the free would stamp the impious name
Of * * * * into the dust; or write it there,
So that this blot upon the page of fame
Were as the serpent's path, which the light air
Erases, and the flat sands close behind!
Ye the oracle have heard:
Lift the victory-flashing sword,
And cut the snaky knots of this foul gordian word,

Which, weak itself as stubble, yet can bind
Into a mass irrefragably firm,
The axes and the rods which awe mankind ;
The sound has poison in it, 'tis the sperm
Of what makes life foul, cankerous, and abhorred ;
Disdain not thou, at thine appointed term,
To set thine armed heel on this reluctant worm.

16. Oh, that the wise from their bright minds would kindle
Such lamps within the dome of this dim world,
That the pale name of PRIEST might shrink and dwindle
Into the hell from which it first was hurled,
A scoff of impious pride from fiends impure,
Till human thoughts might kneel alone,
Each before the judgment-throne
Of its own aweless soul, or of the power unknown !
Oh, that the words which make the thoughts obscure
From which they spring, as clouds of glimmering dew
From a white lake blot heaven's blue portraiture,
Were stript of their thin masks and various hue,
And frowns and smiles and splendours not their own,
Till in the nakedness of false and true
They stand before their Lord, each to receive its due!

17. He who taught man to vanquish whatsoever
Can be between the cradle and the grave,
Crowned him the King of Life. Oh, vain endeavour!
If on his own high will a willing slave,
He has enthroned the oppression and the oppressor.

What if earth can clothe and feed
Amplest millions at their need,
And power in thought be as the tree within the seed?
Or what if art, an ardent intercessor,
Driving on fiery wings to Nature's throne,
Checks the great mother stooping to caress her,
And cries: Give me, thy child, dominion
Over all height and depth? if Life can breed
New wants, and wealth from those who toil and groan
Rend of thy gifts and hers a thousandfold for one.

18. Come thou, but lead out of the inmost cave
Of man's deep spirit, as the morning-star
Beckons the Sun from the Eoan wave,
Wisdom. I hear the pennons of her car
Self-moving like cloud charioted by flame;
Comes she not, and come ye not,
Rulers of eternal thought,
To judge with solemn truth life's ill-apportioned lot?
Blind Love, and equal Justice, and the Fame
Of what has been, the Hope of what will be?
O Liberty! if such could be thy name
Wert thou disjoined from these, or they from thee:
If thine or theirs were treasures to be bought
By blood or tears, have not the wise and free
Wept tears, and blood like tears? The solemn harmony

19. Paused, and the spirit of that mighty singing
To its abyss was suddenly withdrawn;

Then as a wild swan, when sublimely winging
Its path athwart the thunder-smoke of dawn,
Sinks headlong through the aerial golden light
On the heavy sounding plain,
When the bolt has pierced its brain ;
As summer clouds dissolve unburthened of their rain ;
As a far taper fades with fading night ;
As a brief insect dies with dying day,
My song, its pinions disarrayed of might,
Drooped ; o'er it closed the echoes far away
Of the great voice which did its flight sustain,
As waves which lately paved his watery way
Hiss round a drowner's head in their tempestuous play.

NOTES

1. **Camillus,** the liberator of Rome from the Gauls.

2. **Atilius,**—Marcus Atilius Regulus, who suffered death rather than advise his country to make peace with the Carthaginians.

3. **Galilean serpent,** Christianity.

4. **Arminius,** a German chieftain, liberator of the Teuton tribes from Roman dominion.

TENNYSON

PART I.—HIS LIFE

Alfred Tennyson was born on 6th August 1809, at Somersby Rectory in Lincolnshire. He was the third son of the rector of the parish, Rev. George Clayton Tennyson. He received his early education at the village school, and afterwards at the Grammar School at Louth. In 1828 he went to Cambridge, and left in 1831, in consequence of his father's death, without taking a degree. He lived for some years in, or about, London, and in 1842 his third volume of poems, containing *Morte d'Arthur*, *Ulysses*, and *Locksley Hall*, established his poetical fame. In 1845 he was pensioned by Sir Robert Peel, and two years later published *The Princess*. In 1850 three important events in his life took place, the publication of *In Memoriam*, his marriage to Emily Sellwood, and his appointment as Poet Laureate in succession to Wordsworth. He spent the rest of his retired and uneventful life at Twickenham, at Aldworth in Surrey, or at Farringford in the Isle of Wight; and there is little else to record except productions of new poems or dramas. In 1855 appeared *Maud;* between 1859 and 1872 *The Idylls of the King*. Most of his dramas were written between 1875 and 1884:—*Queen Mary*, *Harold*, *The Falcon*, *The Cup*, *Becket*, and *The Promise of May*. In 1884 he was raised to the peerage as Baron Tennyson D'Eynecourt. His other important works are *Teiresias*,

Locksley Hall Sixty Years After, *Demeter*, *The Death of Œnone*, and a pastoral drama, *The Foresters*, *Robin Hood, and Maid Marian*. He died of old age, after a short and painless illness, on 6th October 1892, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Tennyson's surroundings in **early life** were of a kind to encourage the poet in him. His father firmly believed that his childish attempts at verse would develop into something great. His school days gave ample opportunity for the accurate study of nature for which his poetry is remarkable. Lincolnshire scenery—the flats and ridges of the fen country—are worked into all his early poetical attempts, which are not mere imitations of other authors. His precocious genius was shown by the share he took in *Poems by Two Brothers*, published in 1826, the other author being his brother Charles.

His life at **Cambridge** added rather to his friendships than to his attainments. Upon a receptive mind like his, the effect of living among men such as Trench, Alford, Milnes, Merivale, and Hallam, must have been great. He carried off the Vice-Chancellor's medal for English verse with a poem on *Timbuctoo*, and it is to be noted that he used blank verse in this performance, although the custom of the University demanded the heroic couplet. In 1830 appeared his first volume of poems; his second in 1832, shortly after he had left Cambridge. They were praised by Coleridge, and blamed by the *Quarterly Review*. Though Tennyson had a morbid dislike to adverse criticism, he never failed to profit by it when revising his work.

The shock caused by the death of his friend Harry Hallam in 1833 silenced the poet's voice for many years. This time he spent mostly in **London**, enjoying the friendship of Carlyle, Rogers, Thackeray, and Landor. It was his period of concentration and the most important epoch of his life. He read, he thought, he smoked 'infinite tobacco' with Carlyle far into the night. The result was seen in the 1842 volumes. In these, while the craftsman's

skill is undiminished, the thought is deeper and more serious.

When Tennyson's mind and poetic style had been once formed, outside influences made little impression upon him. His writing was little coloured by contemporary events. One notices in his work but faint traces of his everyday life—only a few suggestions from the Surrey downs or the waves of the Channel. But in his poetic life the advance of years made his charity wider, his philosophy more hopeful, his utterance more sincere. His artistic carefulness remained the same.

The following account of him is given by Carlyle :—

'A truly interesting son of earth and son of heaven. A great shock of rough dusty-dark hair, bright, laughing, hazel eyes, massive aquiline face, most massive yet most delicate, of sallow brown complexion, almost Indian looking; clothes cynically loose, free and easy; smokes infinite tobacco. One of the finest-looking men in the world. His voice is musically metallic, fit for loud laughter and piercing wail, and all that may lie between; speech and speculation free and plenteous. I do not meet in these later decades such company over a pipe.'

PART II.—GENERAL CRITICISM

I.—The Poet's Aim

The Passing of Arthur might be selected from among the *Idylls of the King* as being especially suitable for the technical criticism of Tennyson's style in this form of poetry. It must be remembered, however, that, in searching for the poet's ideal and aim, the *Idylls* are to be regarded as a whole, in which *The Passing of Arthur* is merely an episode.

'The general aim, therefore, of all the book is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle dis-

cipline ; which for that I conceived should be most plausible and pleasing, being coloured with an historical fiction, the which the most part of men delight to read, rather for variety of matter than for profit of the ensample ; I chose the history of King Arthur, as most fit for the excellency of his person, being made famous by many men's former works, and also farthest from the dangers of envy and suspicion of the present time. In which I have followed all the antique poets historical ; first Homer, who in the persons of Agamemnon and Ulysses hath ensampled a good governor and a virtuous man, the one in his *Ilias*, the other in his *Odysseis ;* then Virgil whose like intention was to do in the person of Æneas. . . . By ensample of which excellent poets I labour to portray in Arthur . . . the image of a perfect knight.'

These words were written by Spenser to Sir Walter Raleigh, 'expounding his whole intention' in the *Faery Queen.* They might, we think, have been adopted by Tennyson as expounding his intention in the *Idylls.* We may take his expression of 'faint Homeric echoes' in the *Morte d'Arthur* as an anticipatory allusion to the *Idylls*, and a better definition it would be hard to find. No poet of modern times has had his mind more completely saturated with Homer, or has better reproduced the very Homeric phrase, than Tennyson. This makes it the more to be regretted that the man who wrote *Œnone* and *Ulysses* should not have given us an *Odyssey* to match Lord Derby's *Iliad*, in place of *Harold* and *Queen Mary.* The plan, the largeness and nobility of the thought, and often the very diction of the *Idylls*, are distinctly Homeric. The design of portraying a hero, perfect in the virtue of *Magnificence* as Spenser called it—*Great-heartedness*, as we should call it—was present to the minds of both Tennyson and the author of the *Odyssey.* What Tennyson's idea of a perfect man was, he has told us in some of the noblest lines, to be found in this or any other literature. They occur in Arthur's farewell to Guinevere.

Besides this idea of portraying a perfect man, there is an allegory running through the whole poem. Tennyson speaks of this allegory himself—

> . . . This old imperfect tale,
> New-old and shadowing Sense at war with Soul
> Rather than that gray king whose name, a ghost,
> Streams like a cloud man-shaped from mountain peak,
> And clings to cairn and cromlech still.

The allegory of Sense at war with Soul is worked out through the whole of the poem in the figure of the blameless king and his struggles against the savagery and rapine of his age. He forms his order of the Table Round, ordains for it rules of conduct, and for a time makes it a power in the land. But his rules are too strict for the sensual nature of mankind. No vows can he inviolate

> Which flesh and blood perforce would violate.

One by one the knights fall from their high estate of faithfulness and chastity. Treachery completes what weakness has begun, and soon the whole Round Table is dissolved, and Arthur 'passes,' feeling that he has 'but stricken with the sword in vain.' Such is the allegory. Soul is the 'one still strong man in a blatant land,' spiritual and pure, with his life's work mapped out for him, and successfully begun, but opposed and finally defeated by Sense. Sense is the animalism he encounters on every side, the backsliding of his once faithful knights, who could endure but for a while, being in their natures, of the earth, earthy.

> The vows!
> Oh, ay! the wholesome madness of an hour
> They served their use, their time.

II.—Was his Aim successful or not?

We have now to see how far, with the means at his disposal, the poet succeeded in carrying out his ideal. And, in the first place, we may admire his judgment in the selec-

tion of his hero and his period. Arthur and his knights, although quite as mythical as Romulus and Remus, are so familiar to us in legend and ballad that they claim a sort of quasi-historical existence, which tends to keep up the living interest of the narrative. At the same time, knowledge of the history and manners of the age is so especially scanty that the poet can afford himself a very wide range in the treatment of all that bears upon history and manners, without any fear of shocking our sensibilities. He is able to use the traditional accounts of Arthur's life and adventures, to arm him in the armour of Cœur-de-Lion's time, and to import the chivalry and spear-breaking of the middle ages among the Britons who withstood Hengist and Horsa, without the appearance of incongruity. The supernatural machinery also, which is found in these traditional accounts, he makes use of with prudent caution and consummate skill. In these respects he may be favourably compared with Spenser. The danger always to be feared from the introduction of the supernatural is that it may take away the human interest of the story. A second danger is that fairies, witches, and other magical creations have a habit of occasionally ceasing to be awful and becoming merely absurd. These dangers Tennyson entirely escapes. Magic never unduly interferes with the course of his narrative. To his supernatural characters may be applied a criticism on those of Shakespeare—'They are always *constantes sibi;* we know that such beings do not and cannot exist, but we irresistibly feel in reading the scenes in which they appear that if they did exist they could not exist other than he has painted them.'

With this equipment Tennyson proceeds to the task of showing us his notion of ideal manhood, and allegorising Sense at war with Soul. In the first of these objects he has succeeded as few poets before him have done. Arthur stands as one of the most perfect characters presented to us by fiction, and all the more admirably perfect as being admirably human.

A mystery surrounds his birth and death, if so it may be called, but there is nothing mystical about his actions. He is a saint, but a saint of the Church Militant with a task that must be performed. Galahad and Percival may seek the Holy Grail, but he must crush the robber hordes that are devastating his land. He has faith to the utmost, but it is to be shown, not merely by wearing the white flower of a blameless life, but by works. From Idyll to Idyll his character is elaborated until it reaches its climax in the Farewell to Guinevere. Rarely elsewhere do we find the husband of an unfaithful wife regarded otherwise than with pity and contempt. In Arthur's case this situation emphasises the beauty and dignity of his character. The fact that it does so, speaks for the poet's strength and confidence in his own powers.

The shadowing of 'Sense at war with Soul' is perhaps too vaguely worked out to be regarded as a genuine allegory. It has been said that a good allegory is one which not merely amuses the fancy, but also possesses a strong human interest. Both of these Tennyson's allegory fails to do, for it is not sufficiently ingenious to amuse, nor sufficiently part of the narrative to interest. Moreover, it is unfinished, as necessarily it must be, unless we are willing to consider that Tennyson, with his distinctly brave and, on the whole, optimistic way of looking at things, thought that the intellectual and spiritual forces of the world must in the end be conquered by man's lower nature. This he certainly did not think, and he consequently represents Arthur, though crushed and conquered for the time, as not dying, but 'passing' from the world, at some future day.

> To come again; and then or now
> Utterly smite the heathen underfoot,
> Till these and all men own him for their Lord.

The allegory, therefore, as an allegory, is unsatisfactory because incomplete, but we need not on that account condemn it as inartistic.

III.—Was this Aim in Conformity with the Fundamental Principles of Art?

From what has been written above, it will be seen that we consider that the fundamental duty of the Poet, as Teacher, has been fully performed in the *Idylls*. The moral is not a disheartening one. The reader is shown a lofty ideal of true manhood. He is shown the beauty of virtue—not the negative virtue of the cloister, but the practical virtue of the knight errant. He is shown the inherent ugliness of vice, even when wearing its most attractive form. And, above all, the whole poem, rightly considered, is replete with encouragement for those who may have become weary of the battle of life. They are told in language which cannot be mistaken, that defeat and disappointment are nothing; that the only disgrace is to yield, and that victory will come in the end, if only they have gained the support of the three fair Queens who stood by Arthur's throne, and helped him in his need.

> Self Reverence, Self Knowledge, Self Control,
> These three alone lead life to sovereign power.

Such is the lesson of the *Idylls*.

PART III.—TECHNICAL CRITICISM

I.—Elements of Style

1. *Vocabulary.* — Tennyson is before all things a word-painter; yet he manages to get his effects by using comparatively few colours. In a certain sense his vocabulary is a limited one. The variety of words which he employs is not great. But in his hands some of the most simple and ordinary words are given a slightly extended,

yet perfectly intelligible meaning,[1] which produces the same effect as a more copious vocabulary, and with a finer artistic result. He shows a decided preference for words of Saxon origin, rarely indulging in archaisms or unusual expressions, and then only when the sense renders their use peculiarly suitable.[2]

He is a master in the art of forming compound words, and is fond of this device.[3] He continually uses phrases and constructions borrowed from Greek or Latin.[4] He adopts an *ordinary* vocabulary in rapid narration. In conversations or reflective passages he is most addicted to Latinisms and Graecisms. In description, his vocabulary is most copious; and, in this connection, we may refer the reader to the description of the island in *Enoch Arden*.

2. *Sentence, Paragraph, and Metre.*—There is no English poet who preserves the connection between form

N.B.—The following references are all to *The Passing of Arthur*.

[1] Line 360. And the *long* glories of the winter moon.
367. A cry that *shiver'd* to the *tingling* stars.

[2] Line 199. Clothed in white *samite*, mystic, wonderful.
211. Yet I thy *hest* will all perform.
248. I charge thee . . . as thou art *lief* and dear.
310. So flash'd and fell the *brand* Excalibur:
But ere *he* dipt the surface, rose an arm . . .
And caught *him* by the hilt, and brandish'd *him*
Three times, and drew *him* under in the mere.

[3] Line 209, the *aidless* King; l. 225, Excalibur's hilt, twinkling with *topaz-lights* and *jacinth-work;* l. 358, the *sharp-smitten* crag; ll. 427-430, the *deep-meadow'd island-valley* of Avilion; l. 434, the *full-breasted* swan.

[4] Line 51. *O me*, my King (Homeric ὤ μοι).
204. Take Excalibur
And fling him far into the *middle mere.*
(Latin construction of *medius*).
268. Empty breath, and *rumours of a doubt.*
(Hendiadys.)
228. This way and that dividing the *swift* mind.
323. Not tho' I live *three lives of mortal men.*
(Homeric expressions.)

and matter so closely as Tennyson. Accordingly, in his blank verse narrative his sentences are rarely involved. The clauses come in their logical order, and are never placed out of that order except with the definite aim of obtaining some special effect of climax or sound. He imitates Milton in his use of the verse-paragraph, 'arranging the divisions of his sense in divisions of verse, which, albeit identical, and not different in the verse integers, are constructed with as much internal concerted variety as the stanzas or strophes of a Pindaric Ode.' But Tennyson makes a less frequent use of *enjambement*, or overlapping, than Milton, and preferably ends the line and sentence together. He avoids the danger of monotony, and obtains the desired 'internal concerted variety' by changes of cadence and other musical devices. The metre he wields with the utmost skill. His expressed opinion was that rime in poetry was useful only as a help to memory; and he himself is at his best when emancipated from its restrictions. Handled by him blank verse has at one time all the sweetness of the lyric metres, and at another 'the surge and thunder of the Odyssey.'

3. *Adornment.*—Except in the passages where he adopts a studied simplicity, Tennyson's style is loaded with ornament, and nothing but his almost faultless taste prevents it from becoming overloaded. He can say a plain thing plainly, but he much prefers to say it finely, as is natural in a poet who feels that his strength lies rather in language than in range of thought. Of these ornaments his favourite is alliteration, and it must be confessed that he 'affects the letter' to a degree which would be dangerous for any poet with a less musical ear than his. Closely allied to alliteration is onomatopœia, and in the use of this figure his art can be seen more clearly than in any of his other devices. The passage—

> Shocks and the splintering spear, the hard mail hewn,
> Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands, the crash
> Of battle-axes on shatter'd helms.

has only one counterpart, and that occurs in *The Princess*—

> Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil banged
> With hammers.

A good example of sigmatism is found in

> Save for some whisper of the seething seas

and perhaps the finest example of onomatopœia in his poems is the following:

> Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
> And barren chasms, and all to left and right
> The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based
> His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
> Sharp-smitten with the dint of armèd heels—
> And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
> And the long glories of the winter moon.

Equally unmistakable is the cry of the rooks in Maud's high hall-garden,

> Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,
> They were crying and calling

and in *The Brook* Tennyson actually succeeds in showing the feelings of the talkative old farmer's victim,

> He praised his ploughs, his cows, his hogs, his dogs;
> He praised *his hens*, his geese, *his guinea hens*.

The song in *The Brook* is one of the most sustained onomatopœic productions in English literature. Tennyson, in common with Milton, possesses a wonderful faculty of suggesting a complete picture or train of thought by means of one metaphorical expression,[1] and he is acknowledged to be the great master of simile. At one time it is the ela-

[1] Line 95. A death-white mist *slept* over sand and sea.
350. *Clothed with his breath*, and looking, as he walked,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
430. Bowery hollows *crown'd* with summer sea.

borate Homeric simile ;[1] at another the brief, but complete, comparison.[2] It is always appropriate, often splendid, and, as a rule, derived from some aspect of external nature.

II.—Intellectual Qualities of Style

1. *Clearness.*—When we have said that the *Idylls* are Homeric, we have said also that they possess the quality of clearness. Occasionally we meet a phrase which requires to be read a second time before we grasp its full meaning, but such phrases are the exception. There is no confusion in the thought, and where Tennyson's thought is clear, his style corresponds to it. *The Passing of Arthur* possesses clearness of style to an unusual degree, and we may note that the poem in its earliest form belongs to the 'classical' period—the period of *Ulysses* and *Œnone*, rather than to that of *Maud* and *In Memoriam*, which cannot claim to have any such quality of clearness. 'Tennyson, to use his own phrase, "respected the limitations," wrought with no material save such as he could fashion to perfection, grasped and outlined his thought with the sharp precision of one who speaks of familiar experiences, and was master of all the keys of his instrument.'

2. *Simplicity.*—The remarks already made upon adornment show that Tennyson's style, though clear, was anything but simple. Studied simplicity of style we may find, but

[1] Line 304. The great brand . . .
Shot *like a streamer of the northern morn,*
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock,
By night, with noises of the Northern Sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur.

[2] Line 337. Looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture.
389. So *like a shatter'd column* lay the King.

And the following beautiful comparison in *Aylmer's Field*:—
Where a passion yet unborn perhaps
Lay hidden, *as the music of the moon*
Sleeps in the plain eggs of the nightingale.

the bent of his mind tended towards elaboration. And in this lay, perhaps, his chief artistic weakness.

III.—Emotional Qualities of Style

1. *Strength.*—Tennyson's extraordinary versatility is such that it is difficult to characterise his poetry, as possessing one in especial of those emotional qualities of style classed under the head of strength. One at least is never absent, a splendid intensity and earnestness which always commands the interest and respect of the reader, while his admiration is compelled by the steady self-control always visible, preventing the poet's earnestness from ever approaching extravagance.

2. *Pathos.*—Tennyson so thoroughly understood the meaning of the word 'melancholy' that he but rarely attempts to produce this feeling in others; and when he does, it is generally by the simplest means. The whole episode of the passing of Arthur and of the breaking up of the 'goodliest fellowship of noble knights whereof this world holds record' is pathetic in the extreme. But it is not the pathetic side which is dwelt upon so much as the theme on which Tennyson is never tired of preaching—that, come what will, law must be obeyed,—that we must let what will be, be,—and that God fulfils Himself in many ways.

IV.—Kind of Poetry

Much has been written as to whether the *Idylls* constitute an epic or not. The chief argument against the claim is that there is no single hero, and that the *Idylls*, as their name implies, are only a series of pictures. The pictures, it is acknowledged, are perfect of their kind, but, massed together, do not contain that uniformity of interest which an epic requires.

As regards the first objection, that Arthur's claim to the place of hero is challenged by Lancelot, and shared by

other characters, we reply that this reproach can be brought against many of the world's greatest epic poems. Satan and Adam divide the interest of *Paradise Lost*, Achilles and Hector and many another hero do the same in the *Iliad*. In the *Idylls* the central figure of Arthur binds the episodes together quite as completely as the wrath of Achilles binds the episodes in the *Iliad*. Without Arthur, the purpose and plan of the poem falls asunder.

No one can deny that the *Idylls* has the 'beginning and the middle point' that Aristotle deemed essential in an epic. That we have not a *complete* ending is due, as already pointed out, to the symbolism which Tennyson introduced. But an ending there is, even though it is rather hinted at than clearly set before us.

Johnson says that the epic is generally supposed to be heroic, and to contain one great action achieved by a hero. It must also be of a moral tendency. If this is so, the *Idylls* must not be disqualified because Arthur gloriously failed to achieve his one great action. For all agree that the poem is heroic, and contains a high moral purpose.

ESSAY-SUBJECTS:—(1) 'Chivalry in England'; (2) 'Different treatments of the Arthurian Legends.'

N.B.—Tennyson's poems being still copyright, a selection cannot be given.

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2. That an excessive variety of type and other mechanical devices for classification are apt to confuse the average pupil.
3. That most text-books contain much which would be better learned from the Atlas, or which is only an unnecessary tax on the memory.

Consequently, this Series contains no maps and little variety of type; and I have intentionally avoided mentioning, *e.g.* exact heights, distances or sizes, small industries, and unimportant places. Wherever any definite comparisons are made, especially in Lesson 2, they are intended only for reference, and not to be learnt; but, of course, in teaching I do use exact standards—taken from our own locality, and therefore not equally useful

elsewhere — *e.g.* Greenock, Bute, and Ben Lomond. Practically every one of us has seen them, and they are exceedingly easy to grasp at a single glance, to inspect in a single walk, and to apply both inside and outside Scotland. For instance—

Greenock = about 64 thousand people = 2 Perths = $\frac{1}{2}$ Oldham.
Bute = about 64 square miles = $\frac{1}{10}$ Hertfordshire = $\frac{1}{600}$ Scotland.
Ben Lomond = about 32 hundred feet = $\frac{1}{3}$ Carpathians = $\frac{1}{4}$ Alps.

I hope, too, that the book has more than these negative merits. I have had the privilege during the last five years of lecturing on the Teaching of Geography to a large number of practical teachers, including members of the Teachers' Guild, of the National Schoolmasters' Holiday Course, and the Teachers' Section of the Oxford Summer Meeting. This book is written exactly on the lines of these lectures, and has the immense advantage of embodying the criticisms and suggestions of these professional audiences.

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